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FIRST THINGS

THE LIBERALISM OF JOHN PAUL II
Richard John Neuhaus

A BIBLE FIT FOR CHILDREN
Alan Jacobs

THE JEWS AS THE CHRISTIANS SAW THEM
Robert Louis Wilken

REFORMING EDUCATION: A WHOLE NEW WORLD
Chester E. Finn, Jr.

ALSO: Leonard R. Klein / James Nuechterlein: An Exchange
David Aaron Murray on The English Patient · Joel Brind on
Abortion & Breast Cancer · A. J. Bacevich on Samuel Huntington
Molly Finn · Eric Chevlen · Jeremy Driscoll · Hugh Ormsby-Lennon

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The Public Square
A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life

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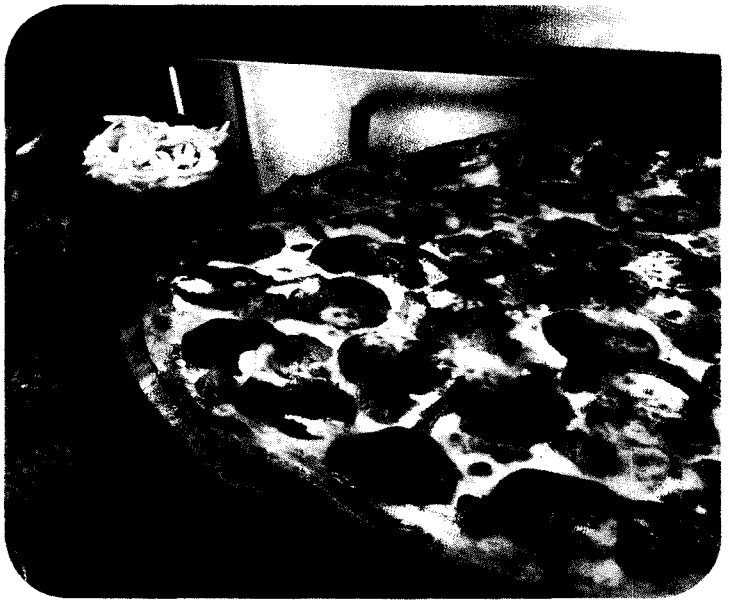

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FIRST THINGS

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Managing Editor: *Matthew Berke*
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FIRST THINGS

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The Catholic Vote

I respectfully disagree with Bishop James T. McHugh's diagnosis of and prescription for the Catholic vote in the 1996 elections ("Catholics and the 1996 Election," February). His Excellency has a truncated view of the bishops' admitted failure, despite great efforts, to influence the political judgment of their congregations. Instead of blaming poor communication, he should realize that the division between the shepherds and their flocks is more profound.

The fact is that the American Catholic hierarchy has little credibility on moral issues, both because of its actions and its omissions. We are all sadly acquainted with the moral scandals involving clergy that regularly erupt on a parish, diocesan, and national level. These afflictions are arguably beyond a bishop's control. But further eroding the bishops' moral authority is their temporizing for well nigh thirty years over Catholics who publicly dissent from the Church's moral teachings. His Excellency singles out Father Robert Drinan, S.J. for particular opprobrium. To my knowledge, Fr. Drinan has suffered no sanctions for his views and continues to function as a priest who regularly publicizes his ideas as a columnist in a Catholic newspaper. There are dozens like him inhabiting Catholic colleges and chancery offices.

Given this background, Bishop McHugh's plan to repackage episcopal statements on public morality seems doomed to failure. Until the bishops first align the clerical ranks with these pronouncements, the laity will conclude that they may ignore the same statements, whatever form they take. Until the bishops treat Catholic moral teaching as a matter of life and death, heaven and hell, probably no one else will either. . . .

Mitchell S. Ritchie
Palatka, FL

I agree with Bishop McHugh's conclusion that for political success the message of the Catholic bishops of America must be "clear, morally compelling, and unyielding." Although most Catholics are not especially well informed about the origins and dilemmas of Catholic social thought, I think perhaps they may have an instinctive understanding that religious authorities may be ignored when they pronounce on a variety of political and social issues without any larger integral Christian social vision. . . .

The bishops are for many reasons understandably reluctant to proclaim the need for a return to a Christian America as it was at the beginning of the Republic, reluctant to proclaim a holy war against the degeneration of American values and mores, but without such a proclamation of what Catholicism seeks, their positions on this or that political issue will probably remain nothing to bother about. It may seem that almost all Catholics oppose abortion, but that is wishful thinking. Many Catholics, laymen and priests alike, avoid the pro-life movement like the plague; thus objectively they really support abortion to one degree or another. The bishops are fearful of losing public support from the liberal media and of being returned to the Catholic ghetto of yesteryear; the laity therefore do not follow their recommendations. It thus falls by default to Patrick Buchanan to lead the Christian peasantry against the chateaux.

Norman Ravitch
Riverside, CA

I am an "in the political trenches" Catholic who works diligently to promote Catholic moral and social teaching. In his article, Bishop McHugh offers evidence that our great fear of IRS reprisal keeps us from exerting the political muscle we are entitled to. In our immediate area, even handing out pro-life ballots listing those candidates against partial-birth abortions was not allowed anywhere on church property due to that fear.

The bishops should also be careful of sending mixed messages. On the one hand, they took a firm public moral stand against partial-birth

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abortion and President Clinton's veto. On the other hand, on the social issue of federal welfare there was strong verbiage urging Catholics to vote for Clinton's party. The bishops need to consider that the states can adequately care for our needy and do so with compassion and effectiveness. . . .

Jerry Fournier
Kansas City, MO

About Bishop McHugh's analysis of the failure of Catholic voters to follow the bishops' recommendations in the 1996 election: I voted for Bill Clinton because he was, in my judgment, more likely to address the real concerns of our country. I was sure that whoever was elected, the abortion evil would not be changed. There are almost no Catholics who support the pro-abortion position, but making anti-abortion the only test for governing is disturbing. The really important question is why are the bishops' directions ignored? Bishop McHugh suggests some of the reasons, but I believe the issue is much more serious.

When Pope Paul VI told us in 1968 that the Church would not approve birth control other than Vatican roulette, bishops all over the world spoke softly and seemed to ask us to respect this order as best we could. Now, most Catholics think their bishops have deserted them. This sense that the faithful who disagree are unwelcome in "their" Church creates a division that weakens the authority and credibility of our bishops.

Robert C. Wilson
Stow, OH

If Bishop McHugh defines moral behavior as voting for candidates of the Republican Party, he will be an unhappy man. Many Republicans are libertarians in disguise, more interested in Second Amendment rights and cutting taxes than in using the resources of government to assist the elderly and poor. Important moral issues include tax cuts that will decrease funding to public schools—there is little interest in providing financial assistance to religiously based schools. Some U.S. Catholics believe that the Church's social teachings actually find a more receptive home in the Democratic Party. Modern Republicans want the government to waste away, allowing individuals the freedom to live their lives with little interference. Democrats would be more willing, philosophically, to use the resources of all to assist those in need.

I understand that the bishop is located in Camden, New Jersey. I wonder how many Republicans he finds among the poor of that city.

I suggest the bishops court both Democratic and Republican Catholics. Instead of condemning Democrats out of hand, try to exercise a little charm on potential candidates. In the long run the Church will have much more success with those who wish to use the power of government to provide a preferential option to the poor. The natural home of pro-lifers is in the Democratic Party.

Patricia Strecker
sent by e-mail

Bishop James McHugh's analysis of the Catholic vote for President Clinton (53 percent) contains cogent, relevant comments of the failure of the USCC to emphasize adequately the Church's position on abortion and suggests that listing it among twenty other social issues of varying import may have diminished its impact. In contact with hundreds of people (as a social worker) I have noticed that a surprisingly high percentage of those who classify themselves as Catholic know little of their faith and do not really practice it in any meaningful sense. Does the bishop really think that the majority read Catholic journals or newspapers? I suspect it is again a case of the remnant, and that this remnant did not vote for President Clinton. . . .

Gene Lutz
Canandaigua, NY

James T. McHugh replies:

The response to my article on "Catholics and the 1996 Election" tells me that a more intensive discussion is needed. In fact, having heard from many bishops, academics, and writers, I am aware that a discussion is already underway and that it will not be limited to election concerns.

I am not asking for "repackaging" of the USCC Statement on Political Responsibility (Mitchell Ritchie). I am urging that any future statements of the bishops "take a tone of moral forcefulness" and distinguish clearly between those issues that have a doctrinal priority—especially the taking of innocent human life in abortion and euthanasia—and issues that derive from the Church's social teaching on which the bishops have expressed a prudential judgment in terms of public policy.

Norman Ravitch makes a good point that most American Catholics do not understand Catholic social teaching and do not grasp the underlying moral principles on which that teaching rests. Nor do most Catholics fully understand the moral seriousness of permissive abortion laws. The article was addressed to bishops, priests, and laity so that each, in their unique way, might assume the moral leadership to bring about a change in the present amoral and antireligious environment in the U.S. But it was especially addressed to the bishops conference to prompt self-reflection on how we address public issues that have a moral base and far-reaching moral implications.

Jerry Fournier points to the confusion resulting from mixed signals given by various priests or bishops. I do not favor telling people that they sin when they vote for a candidate. I urge that we emphasize the seriousness of a small core of issues—giving priority to the life issues because of their treatment in *Evangelium Vitae*. I included racism because of the strong magisterial condemnation, especially by John Paul II. I believe that strong, unequivocal statements by the bishops will lead Catholics to the right electoral choices. But we cannot retreat to silence as elections approach, or create an unending and unnuanced list of issues.

Robert Wilson seems to miss my point. I did not ask that "anti-abortion" be the only criterion, but that in light of *Evangelium Vitae*, it be given

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the higher moral importance that Catholic teaching requires. I specifically noted the evil of racism as another important moral issue. The article was intended to prompt dialogue—which it has—not to put out an unwelcome mat for those who do not fully agree or, perhaps, do not agree at all. The references to *Humanae Vitae* need more space in response than is here available.

I agree with Patricia Strecker that Catholics traditionally found a receptive home in the Democratic party. But that day is over and the door of the "natural home" seems effectively closed at this time. Witness the welfare bill and President Clinton's approval of it, with the support of many in the Democratic Party. Witness also President Clinton and Vice President Gore's courtship of pro-abortion groups and the self-serving and misleading references to Cardinal Bernardin, implying that he would be less demanding regarding politicians and abortion.

I disagree with Strecker's "courtship" strategy because that concept implies the possible setting aside of one's convictions in the interest of fragile harmony for unity. It is too weak a model. I believe Catholics should forcefully assert their moral convictions to every candidate and party right down to the local level, not as political aspirations but as unqualified moral imperatives for the common good.

Gene Lutz is probably right that few Catholics know about bishops' statements. We need to find a way to change that, but the voting returns show that a significant proportion of Catholics did vote for Clinton, including, presumably, many of the leadership elite.

All the writers share a common belief, as do I, that the Church, and especially its leadership, must find new ways to communicate the Church's moral teaching, which includes its social teaching. The teaching should be directed primarily to Catholics so that they will see its relevance for personal behavior as well as a criterion for the development of public policy. And most importantly, they will come to understand that they can be effective as responsible citizens only to the degree that they elect as their representatives persons who respect their moral concerns and take them seriously on all issues, but especially the critical issues of abortion, euthanasia, and the protection of innocent human life.

Which Pornography, Whose Killing?

I found Alan Jacobs' "In on the Kill" (February) thought-provoking, but upon reflection I disagree with him. The "current rage . . . for documentaries showing animals eating other animals" deplored by Mr. Jacobs seems to me no more prevalent than that for documentaries showing monkeys being reared in family groups. The killing scenes are in fact in the same documentaries as the nurturing scenes. . . .

To state the obvious, we human beings are animals too, and we want to know about other species and all aspects of their lives: family, sex, survival, cooperation, fighting, the rearing of offspring, killing, and death. These are fascinating subjects to us as we struggle to understand ourselves and our own nature.

Mr. Jacobs encourages us not to watch "nature's pornography." What a phrase! God the pornographer? Or is it only certain editing Mr. Jacobs deplores? Would we have to watch an unedited twenty-four-hour day of a lion's life to gain Mr. Jacobs' approval?

I disagree that these documentaries are "the modern equivalent of bear-baiting, or the educated middle-class counterpart to cock-fighting." Bear-baiting and cock-fighting are base and cruel human-generated activities. I do not believe that the scenes of animals killing one another (even in slow motion) that are included in balanced documentaries desensitize us, debase us, or encourage human cruelty. There will always be some people who have an excessive fascination with death and cruelty, but such people are (I hope) a small minority. For my part, I found Mr. Jacobs' analogies strained and his theology and philosophy interesting but unpersuasive. I intend to continue enjoying PBS, the Discovery Channel, and Alan Jacobs guilt-free.

Susan Sharlot
Austin, TX

Alan Jacobs should have followed his intuition and sworn off animal meat before submitting his essay, for he too is "in on the kill," and in the same way—another is doing it "for him," so he is a captive eater. That some animals kill other animals is an unsettling zoological given. That some humans kill animals is a repugnant voluntary indulgence. Animals are "sacrificed" to the human god. Meat eating is advanced by quarantining the imagination. The American hamburger is a gentle, heaving bovine cropping grass while it dumbly blesses the land. . . .

The only admissible reason for killing animals would be that their food value is essential for human health, which is a flat-out fiction. Animal flesh is an acquired taste whose acquisition involves dealing death. As carnivores, we humans are more civilized than our savage soul (Latin, *anima*) kin: we wait until the flesh begins to decompose before we eat it.

Charles Weber
Oceanside, CA

Spirituality or Self-Absorption?

That Robert Royal would call Thomas Merton a "great spiritual master of our century" ("The Several-Storied Thomas Merton," February) shows his lack of insight into monasticism as well as Christianity. Total self-absorption is not exactly what Jesus had in mind.

Merton is not exactly what St. Benedict had in mind, either, and one suspects his nonconformity to the rule was financially worth tolerating. He made big bucks for the Trappists and they still sell a lot of his books.

Despite the fact he was literally struck dead during his dialogues with the Buddhists (from which one might conclude that God was not enthusiastic about the project) his

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confreres continued with it. So today, self-seeking and escapism contaminate Christian meditation in many religious communities.

Merton was a damaged person and he caused a lot of harm. Unlike Luther and Henry VIII who tore the physical church apart, Merton injured the soul of the Mystical Body. Only God in His mercy knows how culpable he is. Requiescat in pace.

Nancy E. Hanel
Ijamsville, MD

Father Pangloss, S.J.?

When I came upon the following comments by Father Avery Dulles in the February "Public Square," all nicely set down without editorial moan or murmur—well, you'll forgive me for a tiny bit of hyperbole, but I could have sworn I heard the same rattle of departing chariots that was heard on the eve of the downfall of the Temple in Jerusalem.

> While many of the conciliar and postconciliar reforms were no doubt prudent and necessary accommodations to the times, they did not all strike me as improvements. It was difficult for me to accept the virtual banishment of Latin from the liturgy and the substitution of new popular tunes for the imposing Gregorian chant or the mellifluous Renaissance polyphony. The depreciation of devotion to the saints and the removal of shrines and statues from the churches struck me as impoverishments that had to be regretfully endured. It might be necessary, I concluded, to live through a barren season of slovenly improvisation until the Church could experience some kind of cultural revival.

Since the unconscious horror and hilarity of this seems to have escaped you, let me ask what your reaction would have been had Fr. Dulles similarly expressed himself on an analogous subject:

> It was difficult for me to accept the virtual banishment of Shakespeare from the curriculum and the substitution of Rod McKeon for the imposing Keats and the mellifluous Shelley. The depreciation of devotion to the greats and the removal of classics and masterpieces from the libraries struck me as impoverishments that had to be regretfully endured. It might be necessary, I concluded, to live through a season of Ebonics improvisation and slovenly feminism until the University could experience some kind of cultural revival.

Pangloss, thou shouldst be living at this hour!

John Martin
Brooklyn, NY

Avery Dulles replies:

One would not have to be a Pangloss to imagine that God might permit members of the Church to be periodically weaned from excessive attachment to styles of worship they have legitimately come to cherish. They must be taught not to confuse the substance of Christianity with even its finest cultural expressions. If Catholics were being deprived of revealed truth or of the sacraments, Mr. Martin might be justified in speaking of the rattle of departing chariots. But let him look deeper. The true treasure of the Church is not its rhetoric or its music.

Anglican Contradictions

I respond, as a fellow Episcopalian, to the letter on "Anglican Bashing" by Christopher Holleman in the February issue.

The protestation that there is virtue in the Episcopal Church because traditionalists "still fight the good fight" inevitably reminds me of one of Abraham's negotiations with God to save Sodom. While Abraham persuaded God to reduce the number of righteous men from fifty to ten, no one contended that Sodom was a model of how to run a city. Before commending our "Catholic and Reformed" church as a model to others, we might spend some time reexamining whether it has really worked for us. It may be, in fact, that the problems Mr. Holleman discusses have actually been fostered by this very combination.

The concession that the Church should be both Catholic and Reformed is the initial push-off on a very slippery slope indeed. For how is such a church to retain its unity at some identifiable point on the "Cath-olic to Reformed" continuum? One might theoretically argue that a church's bishops choose the appropriate point on the continuum, and provide the necessary unity for the church, but, as a matter of historical fact, the Anglican Church rejected this option, and purposefully chose to combine contradictory views in a sort of colloidal suspension. These contradictions—the contradictions between Catholic and Reformed—remain deeply imbedded in our Prayer Book and in our church. It was almost inevitable that such a church would ultimately foment a proliferation of still more contrary and antithetical views.

And so people of diametrically opposite views can still honestly call themselves "Anglican." While our bishops now tell us that there is "grace" in our "diversity," what does this do to our belief that we are members of a church? When we say we espouse the traditional Anglican beliefs to which Mr. Holleman refers, we are usually affirming the views of our parish, or perhaps a group within our diocese, but somewhere deep down inside, we know that these are not the views of our church. And if we are honest, we have to acknowledge that we have no more "authentic" a claim to represent the views of our church than any other group within it, precisely because our church was built upon a foundation of "Catholic and Reformed."

We are certainly confused and conflicted. Yet the cure offered by Mr. Holleman—to dismiss our bishops as "corrupt and decadent leaders"—is no better than the disease. We now add disobedience to our confusion, a disobedience that further undermines our church. We disavow the Apostolic Tradition. We

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are shepherdless. . . .

Jennifer L. Van Tuyl
Hopewell Junction, NY

The Bible as Literature

I found Father Neuhaus' appropriation of G. K. Chesterton's dismissal of the idea of the "Bible as Literature" (Public Square, February) a little unnerving.

Perhaps this is only because my copy of FIRST THINGS arrived literally a week before I began to teach another semester of my course in "The Bible as Literature." But I do think that a few observations about that ongoing experience—more specifically, teaching the course at a state university—could add another perspective.

A distinction that might clarify the discussion is that the phrase "Bible as Literature" can mean two entirely different things, and by using one definition we are already begging a crucial question: it can mean (and this is the sense in which GKC and Fr. Neuhaus seem to use the phrase) studying the Bible by bracketing serious engagement with religious issues and religious belief. This is, as I say to my students, sort of like studying the films of Sharon Stone and bracketing sex. . . . The second meaning of the phrase in no way assumes that religious issues will not be engaged, but only that such engagement will come through learning together how to read the text.

How does one engage these issues in the (secular) classroom? After a decade and a half teaching the course, and of reading folks like Alasdair MacIntyre, Stanley Hauerwas (who, in my mind's ear, tells me from time to time in a high-pitched Texas twang that what I am doing is largely a crock), George Marsden, and Fr. Neuhaus, I have more questions than answers. The course is more problematic for me than when I began to teach it.

But also more interesting. The first day of class this semester a student asked me if I was a Christian. When I first started teaching this course my answer would have been the standard, "I'll be happy to discuss that question with you after class." This year my answer was, "Yes." And the past couple of times that I have taught the course I have spent an enormous amount of time and energy trying in various ways and with varying degrees of success to make the crucial point that one's very ability to see what is in this text can't meaningfully be separated from those traditions of belief that provide the framework for knowing what to look for. Dealing with that point in a sustained way with students who come in many varieties—more or less fundamentalist Christians, more or less Catholic Christians, more or less agnostics, and the occasional Hindu—is one of the things that makes the course very interesting as a teaching and (for me) learning experience.

It also seems relevant that, while I surely don't do the same things in my Bible as Lit class as I do when I teach an RCIA class on the Bible, or speak to a Bible study group or a church group (as students of mine have asked me to do), there is nevertheless an enormous amount of overlap, a much greater amount than GKC's alternatives would seem to allow for. Should I or would I teach my course differently if I were teaching it at a religiously committed college, at Calvin College, or at Steubenville, or at Wheaton College, or at Boston College? I simply don't know the answer to that one.

If Fr. Neuhaus (or, more interestingly, Mr. Chesterton) were to show up in my class, he would see students who emphatically do not leave their beliefs at the door when they engage in what is not only lively but sometimes passionate discussion. Those teaching the Bible as Literature do not have to assume that the public classroom is naked. There can be more to it—my experience tells me a lot more to it—than the either/or dichotomy Chesterton posits.

Ronald B. Herzman
SUNY Distinguished Teaching
Professor of English
Geneseo, NY

Richard J. Neuhaus replies:

It would certainly be *much* more interesting if Mr. Chesterton showed up. And I expect he, like me, would take a very different view of teaching the Bible as Literature if Professor Herzman were the teacher.

Accrediting Theologians

Re "When the Church 'Interferes,'" (Public Square, February): Catholic colleges and universities could use theological accrediting boards to certify theology teachers to receive mandates to teach or to judge complaints against a teacher's orthodoxy. U.S. schools and hospitals are regularly subject to such accrediting agencies. Regional theological accrediting boards could be made up of experts appointed by the bishops and universities of a given region. The judgment of the board would be subject to the ratification of the individual bishop of the relevant diocese.

A theology teacher could appeal a negative judgment to a doctrinal commission of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. Final appeal could be made to the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

In this system a local bishop's theological ignorance or bias could be avoided, a fairer judgment given, local responsibility by subsidiarity encouraged, and Vatican authorities not unnecessarily burdened. The genuinely Catholic character of theology teaching in Catholic colleges and universities could be more effectively assured.

(The Rev.) Jerome F. Tracy, S.J.
Colombiere Center
Clarkston, MI

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THIS TIME

Catholics at Home

James Nuechterlein

Elsewhere in this issue ("Catholics in Exile," p. 9) Leonard R. Klein responds to my January column, "In Defense of Sectarian Catholicity." He does not disagree with my argument that catholic orthodoxy can exist in places outside the Roman Catholic and Orthodox communions (though he has some reservations about the way I frame the argument), but he expresses serious doubt as to whether that evangelical catholic position can be sustained over time. Indeed, he is so pessimistic about the Lutheran situation—the context in which I framed my argument—as to see it as confirmation of "Neuhaus' Law" that "where orthodoxy is optional, orthodoxy will sooner or later be proscribed."

I have no fundamental quarrel with Pastor Klein—we are brothers in the faith and cobelligerents in intra-Lutheran controversies—but we do have some differences as to Lutheran and Catholic realities and, perhaps, over what such realities suggest about the choices confronting those of us with evangelical catholic convictions.

I am not, to begin with, persuaded that conditions in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), bad as they are, point to "the gradual proscription of orthodoxy." It is true, as I noted in my column, that the Lutheran catholic tradition "faces threats from both sentimental Protestant evangelicalism and desiccated Protestant liberalism," but the ELCA has not, as an institution, abandoned its commitment to the orthodox Christianity of the sixteenth-century Lutheran Confessions. It is weak on abortion (though there are recent welcome signs of sobriety on that issue) and it tolerates all too much theological foolishness, but it is not in its public doctrine an apostate body. In admittedly weak competition, it is the most orthodox of the mainline Protestant churches.

If I understand him correctly, Pr. Klein's quarrel with the ELCA goes beyond "pastoral and personal sins and failures" to the very structure of the church body. The problem is not so much bad intention—though there may be a lot of that—as constitutive incapacity. He complains of "structural commitment to optional orthodoxy" and of "constitutionally designed indifference to catholicity." In other words, the absence in the ELCA of a "committed orthodox teaching office" renders whatever inclination there might be in the church to safeguard catholic orthodoxy nothing more than a pious wish.

It is difficult to deny that the presence of an effective magisterium within the ELCA would significantly increase its chances of maintaining orthodoxy, but one is tempted at this point to say to Pr. Klein, Welcome to American Lutheranism. Where has there ever existed among us the magisterium he longs for? When has congregationalism not marked our polity, or when have "institutional democracy, anti-elitism, and . . . individualism" not been beguiling temptations? The history of Lutheranism in America is littered with episodes of theological laxity and doctrinal deviation, some of them more troubling than anything occurring today. Recall, for example, Samuel Schmucker's misbegotten effort in the mid-nineteenth century to rewrite the Augsburg Confession so as to deny baptismal regeneration and the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, thus—so the idea went—bringing Lutheranism within the general American Protestant consensus.

Pr. Klein might well respond: Just so. Threats to doctrinal stability are the recurring fate of a church without an effective teaching authority. But what has been true of Lutheranism in America has been true of all churches everywhere. What I wrote in my "Sectarian Catholicity" essay was no mere rhetorical flourish: "The history of the Church—including Orthodoxy and Catholicism—is a tale of unending struggle to hold the orthodox center against sundry temptations great and small. There is no reason to believe that God will unburden any part of His Church of that struggle short of the Second Coming." In the meantime, a sense of historical perspective might protect us from premature despair over the ills that currently afflict us.

None of this is to deny Rome's advantage over Protestant churches in being able to define more effectively and continuously the boundaries of permissible theological speculation. But as Pr. Klein well knows—and as the laments of traditionalist Catholics regularly remind the rest of us—the existence of an authoritative magisterium is no guarantee against slovenly liturgies, banal preaching, and virtually heretical catechesis. And the reverse point holds as well. Adherence to Scripture and the Confessions has maintained within Lutheranism, for all its problems, a surprisingly widespread orthodox faithfulness in congregational life (and not just that of the ELCA) that belies the frequent vapidities of its leadership. I understand the temptation, but it seems to me excessive to describe the theological situation within Lutheranism today as one where "private judgment" and "optional orthodoxy" prevail.

This is not the place for a full-scale discussion of why many evangelical catholics find Papal Infallibility and the Marian dogmas serious obstacles to contemplation of a return to Rome. But I confess myself astonished at the blithe nonchalance with which Pr. Klein dismisses the issue. "The Marian

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dogmas are easy," he assures us. That is so only if one is unconcerned with their lack of biblical foundation and with the serious implications of belief in the Immaculate Conception for the doctrine of Original Sin. (The latter concern gave even Thomas Aquinas—among many other Catholic theologians—considerable difficulty.) And Papal Infallibility, to put it mildly, is in a quite different category of Petrine authority from those limited forms of papal primacy that (some) evangelical catholics are prepared to consider.

Pr. Klein wonders why I do not acknowledge women's ordination as "at least as much an obstacle to church unity as the Marian dogmas and Infallibility." I do not deny that women's ordination is an obstacle to church unity. I nonetheless affirm it because I have not been persuaded by any of the theological arguments against it. It does not, in any case, strike me as the matter of dogmatic necessity the Vatican has declared it to be.

Pr. Klein does not mention the fourth of the post-Reformation issues that I cited as causing unease among many evangelical catholics: Rome's ban on contraception. The issue of contraception has created a crisis of conscience among many devout and thoroughly orthodox Roman Catholics. These are not liberal or "cafeteria" Catholics, but they find themselves unable to conform their beliefs or practices to *Humanae Vitae*.

One difficulty of an authoritative teaching office is what happens when its decrees conflict—or are seen to conflict—with the *sensus fidelium*. If on any major issue the magisterium insists on obedience that the faithful decide they cannot offer, it may undermine its general authority. One hitherto unthinkable refusal of compliance can make succeeding refusals routine. Yet how does the magisterium modify entrenched positions without raising questions as to its authoritative nature? The dilemma in the Catholic Church over contraception ought to remind evangelical catholics that a strong teaching authority, for all its virtues and attractions, has problems of its own.

Pr. Klein suggests that for those outside Rome and Orthodoxy the issue of where the one Church of Christ resides "is not quite the question that Mr. Nuechterlein says it is." (I had noted, in defense of my argument that the One Church has more than one historical manifestation, Rome and Orthodoxy's competing claims.) I concede his point that Rome recognizes the catholic legitimacy of the East, but the Orthodox churches' refusal of the Eucharist to all non-Orthodox (Catholics included) and their general (though not universal) insistence that Catholic converts be rebaptized and former Catholic priests reordained indicates that they do not reciprocate. This does not, of course, resolve the dispute over the true meaning of catholicity, but I would continue to argue that evangelical catholics can plausibly claim membership in the one Church of Christ.

So there we are. We "sectarian catholics" continue to face difficult choices. Evangelical Catholics have typically thought of themselves as "temporarily separated" from Catholicism and Orthodoxy, but, as I indicated, it now appears that here "temporary" means short of the Eschaton. Our ecumenical responsibilities require that we offer compelling reasons—reasons beyond habit or tradition—for maintaining the separation. Evangelical catholics within the Lutheran Church who do not find such compelling reasons in the remaining Lutheran differences with Rome and Orthodoxy will have to decide for themselves where the logic of their analysis leads.

"Neuhaus' Law" suggesting the ultimate proscription of orthodoxy in the churches outside Rome and Constantinople is, in fact, not a law but a prediction. That prediction may come true. If it does—Pr. Klein thinks that likely, perhaps even imminent, and I do not—evangelical catholics will face new, utterly agonizing, choices. Meanwhile, however, they can remain where they are. And do so without regret or apology. FT

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Opinion

Catholics in Exile

Leonard R. Klein

In "The Unhappy Fate of Optional Orthodoxy" (Public Square, January), Richard John Neuhaus proposes "Neuhaus' Law" concerning the life of religious institutions: "Where orthodoxy is optional, orthodoxy will sooner or later be proscribed." In the same issue, James Nuechterlein argues ("In Defense of Sectarian Catholicity") that catholic orthodoxy can nonetheless exist in places outside the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches. Although Mr. Nuechterlein's claim is surely correct, the existence of "sectarian catholicity" may go further to uphold Neuhaus' Law than to disprove it. Mr. Nuechterlein and I are both members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), and I think we can both see the evidence for the gradual proscription of orthodoxy. The interest groups and the merrily bland can happily tolerate each other. What they cannot tolerate is the continual threat of orthodoxy.

The congregationalist structure of the denomination is such that it must at least tolerate islands of catholicity like Mr. Nuechterlein's Christ Church in Manhattan or Christ Church in York, Pennsylvania, where I serve. There is, however, no deep commitment to maintain it. If I leave, my bishop would likely strive to maintain the tradition of this congregation. The same is true for Mr. Nuechterlein's congregation (although it was far less clearly true under his previous bishop). Mr. Nuechterlein's pastor is, like me, disconnected from any reliable authority or magisterium, and we cannot guarantee to our congregations that they will be served in an orthodox manner after we leave. In a sizable, sturdy congregation like mine perhaps two successions can be guaranteed; in a small urban church like Mr. Nuechterlein's, not a single succession can.

Mr. Nuechterlein's pastor and I do draw on the riches of the Lutheran Confessional tradition as an expression of, and an entrée into, the great catholic tradition. We preach and teach in faithfulness to Scripture and Tradition. And the Lutheran pastor down the street may do the opposite with complete impunity because our communion is organized not around orthodoxy but around a series of pragmatic compromises designed to hold a loose coalition together. This is not a matter of mere weakness and unfaithfulness; it is a structural commitment to optional orthodoxy. It has the further effect of calling into question the ministries of those of us who strive to be orthodox. Why, after all, are we any better Lutherans than that pastor up the street? Nobody has said so and nobody will.

Orthodoxy is optional and we all know it. Orthodoxy is not preferred and we all know it. In the pulpit and classroom, and in pastoral conversation, we are utterly compromised. I can and do say that the Great Tradition condemns abortion as a violation of the commandment against killing, but the ELCA pays for it and teaches that it is a matter of private judgment. I can say that the first person of the Trinity must be understood as Father, but the ELCA publishes liturgies and educational materials that avoid the masculine term.

Certainly there is always a struggle for faithfulness in the Church, but the difference between our situation, where commitment to orthodoxy is a matter of private judgment, and that of our friends in the more fully catholic communities is very stark, even if a visit to one of our parishes followed by a visit to a weakly led Catholic parish might give a different impression.

In my farewell editorial in the *Lutheran Forum*, I argued that Lutheranism would need to address at least three critical issues in order to preserve its catholicity: moral theology, the communion of saints, and the role of bishops. These all relate to the question of private judgment. Can the church teach with clarity and authority in a responsible relationship to its own past? No effort to do so emerges from our leadership, and our bishops are constitutionally barred from exercising such authority. Those of us who seek to maintain our catholicity in the ELCA must recognize that we do so with no useful support from the institution. Our struggle to maintain our catholicity therefore remains the matter of private judgment that, as Father Neuhaus notes, Cardinal Manning warned about. I do not know whether I am doing the "whining" Mr. Nuechterlein complains of, but it is indeed what he called an "unhappy predicament"; and the moral and personal price of staying—one hopes for the sake of the gospel and not for meaner reasons—is real.

Even if one agrees with Mr. Nuechterlein that on balance the Reformers had the better of the sixteenth-century argument, being a good Lutheran remains only an option, and not a norm. And good Lutheranism needs to be shepherded by the local pastor through the minefields of institutional democracy, anti-elitism, and American individualism by personal persuasion and force of argument. No committed orthodox teaching office stands behind Mr. Nuechterlein's pastor or me, and when orthodox pastors, even the most politically deft of them, run afoul of local custom, it is often they who are seen as

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dispensable by bishops, executives, and bureaucrats for whom not rocking the boat is the first rule of leadership.

This being the case, Mr. Nuechterlein is to be commended for not trying to strengthen his argument by listing the sins of Rome and Constantinople or pointing to the all too real problems with preaching and liturgy in the Roman Catholic Church. Pastoral and personal sins and failures are a different matter from constitutionally designed indifference to catholicity, and calling attention to the smudges on the other guy's kettle is quite pointless.

Still, I would like to challenge him on the matter of the modern dogmas, since I am convinced that they are not in themselves a sufficient reason for maintaining the sixteenth-century schism from our side. The Marian dogmas are easy. The Assumption only states where Mary obviously is and the Immaculate Conception that she was predestined to be there. And the definition of Papal Infallibility is, after all, carefully restricted. If one is prepared to grant the concept of primacy (and in their more lucid moments Lutherans have) it can surely be seen even by the wary as a great tool for catholicity in the modern world and a reasonable expression of the papal primacy that on occasion we have been willing to grant.

Since Mr. Nuechterlein lists these as problems, however, I am a little surprised that he does not acknowledge a modern Protestant decision as the equivalent obstacle that it in fact is. He tweaks us with the gender of his pastor, but surely he must recognize that the decisions of the Protestant churches to ordain women are at least as much an obstacle to church unity as the Marian dogmas and Infallibility. This is not to argue that women should not be ordained, nor is it to diminish in any way the qualifications and excellent reputation of his pastor, but when stating problems they see in Rome or Orthodoxy, Protestants are, I think, bound to note the ecumenically disruptive character of this action.

Those of us outside Rome and Orthodoxy should note that the question of where the one true Church resides is not quite the problem that Mr. Nuechterlein says it is. Rome has never ceased to recognize the catholicity of the East, a point emphasized in John Paul II's declaration that the Church must learn to breathe with both her lungs. Orthodoxy has a harder time of it, of course, but surely many Orthodox hierarchs and theologians, for all their objections to Western innovations and the claims of the papacy, recognize the legitimacy and catholicity of the Roman Church and the genuine possibility of full communion.

We plainly are in a different place in spite of the genuine catholicity both of our Lutheran tradition and of many faithful parishes. By and large Lutheranism has dissipated the authority of the ministry, ceased serious discipline, compromised the sacraments, relativized the moral tradition, and eschewed magisterial continuity. Protestant church bodies are sectarian in a way that Rome and Orthodoxy are not. This recognition requires the exodus of no one. Sustaining the optional and sectarian catholicity of parishes such as ours is a noble endeavor. All who are engaged in it should be commended, for they are out there without a net. The arguments that support Mr. Nuechterlein's conscientious position unfortunately also demonstrate Neuhaus' Law.

LEONARD R. KLEIN *is former Editor of* Lutheran Forum *and Senior Pastor of Christ Lutheran Church in York, Pa.*

The English Patient Plays Casablanca

David Aaron Murray

If it does nothing else, the success of the film version of *The English Patient* (nine Academy Awards, including Best Picture) proves that the secret to postmodern film technique lies more in the way the story gets packaged than in the story itself. Hide a commonplace sentiment behind layers of montage, bricolage, multiple viewpoints, time shifts, and dazzling cinematography and music. Keep the plot ends loose for the first third of the film. Cut back and forth from a ruined villa in World War II Italy, in which a mysterious "English patient" with a burned face is recovering from being shot down over the North African desert, to his remembered past. Make it disjointed and strange, like a Hallmark card cut apart and reassembled into a Cubist construction. But the Hallmark card nonetheless remains, and *The English Patient* proves that sentimentalism can survive endless adaptation—even postmodern film techniques.

Count Laszlo Almasy, the title character (his being called "the English patient" is meant to be ironic), was, before being shot down, a Hungarian on an international team mapping the North African desert on the eve of World War II. He is in an Italian villa because Hana, his army nurse, has defied her superiors in order to stay behind with him while he dies. When a mysterious Canadian named Caravaggio intrudes on the idyll in the ruined villa, it turns out that he and Hana come from within two blocks of each other in Montreal. Almasy protests, "Why should where we come from be so important? I don't

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like it." Hana demurs, arguing that in wartime these things become important. The desert-mapping team is supposed to embody a fleeting cosmopolitanism, since it comprises Englishmen, Canadians, a Hungarian, and some Arabs. One of the team members says wistfully on the eve of war, "Countries didn't mean anything to us out there, did they?"

The mapping team is joined by Geoffrey Clifton, a dashing aristocrat and pilot who later turns out to be secretly working for the British government in anticipation of war. Even though the film goes out of its way to show what a nice guy he is, he's working for the old world that still believes in boundaries and borders, while Laszlo and Clifton's wife Katherine enter into an affair that takes them into an emotional desert beyond all boundaries. Even though Katherine insists that the one thing she hates is a lie, she finds herself fornicating with her lover while, a short distance away, her husband plays Santa Claus to the British troops in Cairo.

There are references to numerous films and novels in *The English Patient.* A volume of Herodotus' *Histories* plays an important symbolic part, *Anna Karenina* is mentioned, and there are references to *Lawrence of Arabia.* But the inverted parallels to the 1942 film *Casablanca* are most striking. In fact, *The English Patient* can be regarded, in part, as a deconstruction of *Casablanca,* an anti-*Casablanca* that turns all the assumptions of the older film on their heads. You could say that *The English Patient* answers the question that all Bogie-lovers have been carrying around for decades: What if Ilsa had stayed behind with Rick? But there is more than that. Imagine a Rick who willingly gives the letters of transit to Major Strasser, a Victor Laszlo who tries to kill Rick and maybe Ilsa too, and you've got the flavor of this film.

In *Casablanca* the good-guy husband is named Laszlo; in *The English Patient* it's the tortured lover. A drunken Rick makes an ass of himself when Ilsa first visits him alone. A jealousy-crazed Almasy makes an ass of himself in front of a roomful of people after Katherine breaks off the affair. Ilsa says to Rick, "One woman has hurt you, and you'll take your revenge on the rest of the world." Almasy revenges himself on the British for not helping him rescue Katherine by giving valuable maps to the Germans. Almasy's last words to Katherine when he leaves her are, "I'll never leave you." In their last exchange at the airport, Ilsa says to Rick, "Last night, I said I'd never leave you." Rick: "And you never will."

Casablanca was a brilliant piece of propaganda justifying formerly isolationist America's participation in the good war. For all its sex appeal, Rick's bitter self-pity was ultimately to be understood as regressive. *Casablanca,* too, was concerned with nationality. Remember Rick's answer to Colonel Strasser's question, "What nationality are you?" "I'm a drunkard." By the end of the film he's emerging from his isolation and making necessary alliances, even with the morally questionable Captain Reynaud, who achieves his own regeneration. Reynaud teasingly accuses Rick, "Not only are you a sentimentalist, but you've become a patriot." But of course, beyond sentiment or patriotism, Rick and Louis' moral choices involve the recognition of a larger struggle between good and evil going on, not simply a struggle between countries.

It's too much to call Katherine an anti-Ilsa; she's more of an Anna Karenina, in that we never understand her motive for the affair. But Almasy is definitely an anti-Rick. Like Rick, he is a brooding loner. Rick, however, has an activist past. We know nothing of Almasy before he joins the mapping team, except for a few details the film encourages us to regard as misleading: he is a Hungarian count who speaks German and has a mysterious French document in his treasured copy of Herodotus. In *Casablanca,* Victor Laszlo tells Rick that he's trying to run away from himself and can never succeed. In *The English Patient,* Almasy does succeed; his affair with Katherine *is* his running away from himself, to his and everyone else's destruction.

In *The English Patient,* the fundamental things definitely do not apply. The characters in this film make choices, too, but then pretend that their choices simply happen to them. After Katherine breaks off the affair, Almasy broodily returns to his desert mapping. Geoff Clifton flies down from Cairo to pick him up, and crashes his bi-plane with Katherine inside. We're not sure whether Clifton is trying to run Almasy down, or simply to commit suicide and kill Katherine. Almasy carries the injured Katherine to the nearby "Cave of Swimmers," which contains primitive rock paintings, and promises to return.

Almasy walks three days through the desert to get help. Instead of helping him retrieve Katherine, the British soldiers in Cairo distrust him because of his foreign name and arrest him. This ill-treatment (one British soldier calls him "Fritz") apparently is enough to justify Almasy's handing over his maps to the Germans (after murdering a British guard and escaping captivity) in exchange for their help in returning him to Katherine's cave. Never mind that thousands of innocent people will die during the invasion of Tobruk as a result. As Almasy retorts to Caravaggio when they discuss the incident later in Italy, thousands of other innocent people would have died somewhere else in any case. War happens. We're all caught up in an inchoate swirl of meaningless events, and the best we can do is to grab the passion while we can. Almasy's passion has lifted him above these petty concerns, and besides, the British were mean to him.

The subplot involving Caravaggio, a Canadian spy in Cairo who is caught and tortured because Almasy's betrayal allows the Germans to photograph

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him, is awkwardly melodramatic. In revenge for his mutilation by the Germans, Caravaggio has tracked down and killed all who were responsible, with only Almasy left. Caravaggio would seem like a voice for moral responsibility when he protests to Almasy, "What you did had consequences!"—one consequence being that one of Almasy's British teammates in the desert commits suicide when he learns that Almasy has sold out to the Germans. But Caravaggio declines to kill him in the end, presumably out of admiration for the depth of his passion. In one of the film's less felicitous lines, Almasy says, "You can't kill me; I died long ago." If this means anything, it means that an experience of passion like that of Almasy and Katherine lifts one above petty concerns like morality and personal responsibility. We're meant to see that Caravaggio recognizes the fruitlessness of the quest for moral responsibility, or perhaps that his revenge is no more noble than Almasy's. War and passion have happened to Almasy, and he's not responsible; killing him would be pointless.

A short time later, Hana achieves her own transcendence of the fundamental things by giving Almasy a fatal overdose of morphine at his request. We are apparently to understand that she is maturing. Her motivation for staying behind with Almasy in the first place was that everyone she loved has been killed, and she wanted to hold onto at least one patient. But now she is facing her fears and realizing herself—by becoming a killer (albeit a sympathetic one).

Hana's action is consistent with the only messages of the film: "No boundaries," and "We are the countries." A superficial reading of the film might see gestures toward a kind of cosmopolitanism or internationalism: the polyglot mapping team; the conversation between Caravaggio, Hana, and Almasy; and the remark about countries meaning nothing in the desert. Indeed, director Anthony Minghella has been encouraging some such interpretation in interviews.

But all this is a feint. The second message completely negates internationalism, or any kind of public involvement. The only character in *The English Patient* who comes close to Victor Laszlo is Geoff Clifton—both are nice guys selflessly working for a larger cause. But when it comes to his wife's infidelity, Clifton cannot control his emotions or offer forgiveness as Victor Laszlo can. (It's also true, of course, that Katherine's betrayal is much less excusable than Ilsa's.)

What's really celebrated in this film is not cosmopolitanism or internationalism but a moral and spiritual isolationism more profound than that which *Casablanca* was trying to disturb. The lack of boundaries *The English Patient* celebrates is not that of cosmopolitanism but that of narcissism, the chief symptom of which is the inability of the self to feel or recognize proper boundaries of feeling.

With Katherine's final diary entry—a lot of blather about how we should die with our bodies marked by all of our intense experiences (including, in a bit of gender blurring, "bodies we've entered")—the film descends rapidly into a bathos from which it never recovers. Katherine's diary, read by the alternating voices of Katherine and Hana, provides the overinflation of sentiment. If "we are the countries," then our troubles don't just amount to less than a hill of beans in a world that's larger then we are. Instead, our tawdry love affairs and betrayals acquire the drama of armies marching and empires collapsing (as suggested by the way Almasy stores his personal mementos between the pages of Herodotus).

The point here is to make nationalism and mapmaking into symbols for a traditional moral order—the "fundamental things" of *Casablanca*. The film suggests that people who believe in maps and countries, those nasty things that uptight Europeans created and that caused World War II, are like people who believe that adultery is wrong. They're both hung up on boundaries, unlike the brave new narcissists who know that the only things that matter in life are me and my intense personal experiences. There is really no more to the central point of this film than can be shown in a sixty-second ad for Nike, Calvin Klein perfume, or any other of the increasing number of products that can be sold by images of two faux-sweaty bodies rubbing together. That's presumably why David Denby, on the Charlie Rose show, waxed eloquent about the "texture" of the film. Our visual expectations—and moral sensibilities—have been so influenced by elegantly nihilistic TV commercials that it reassures us to find them at the heart of such putatively complex, high-brow films as *The English Patient.*

DAVID AARON MURRAY *teaches humanities and literature at Maryville University in St. Louis. He is currently working on a book about gnosticism and literary theory.*

Abortion, Breast Cancer, and Ideology

Joel Brind

In innumerable newspaper and television stories shortly after New Year's, the reassuring news was passed to the American people: Science—in the form

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of the *New England Journal of Medicine*—had spoken on the question of abortion and breast cancer. A supposedly definitive study from Denmark, prepared by Dr. Mads Melbye and his colleagues in Copenhagen, had concluded, "Induced abortions have no overall effect on the risk of breast cancer."

There was perhaps something disingenuous in the reassurance, for the prior evidence of abortion's contribution to breast cancer was news that had been assiduously suppressed by much of the mainstream medical and popular press. But now, with the publication of the Danish study, all doubts were put to rest. The debate about abortion is now rightly restricted to "abortion itself—a debate that is ethical and political in its essence," declared Dr. Patricia Hartge of the National Cancer Institute in an editorial that accompanied the publication of the study in the January *New England Journal of Medicine*. Women need no longer "worry about the risk of breast cancer when facing the difficult decision of whether to terminate a pregnancy."

It was unusual for such advice—and such canonization of a study as "definitive"—to come only three months after a comprehensive review of the literature, published in the British Medical Association's *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, reached essentially the opposite conclusion. Written by myself and colleagues at Penn State's College of Medicine in Hershey, the review compiled the data from all twenty-three available studies, dating back to 1957. Even with the most conservative statistical averaging method, we found a significant, 30 percent increase in the risk of breast cancer attributable to a woman's having had one or more induced abortions.

Having arrived at this finding about what is in the vast majority of cases an elective surgical procedure, we urged the opposite of Dr. Hartge's reassurance that women need not worry—pointing out the "present need for those in clinical practice to inform their patients fully about what is already known." There now stands an impressive total of thirty studies worldwide, twenty-four of which show increased breast cancer risk among women who have chosen abortion, seventeen of which are statistically significant on their own. Such an overwhelming preponderance of the evidence is usually more than enough to convict any risk factor in the eyes of the medical establishment, particularly when the connection makes biological sense, with the marked overexposure to estrogen (the female hormone implicated in most breast cancer risk factors) experienced by women who elect to terminate a normal pregnancy.

But the problem is, of course, that abortion is a medical procedure whose political and social significance sets it outside normal public health concerns—even, or perhaps especially, for the public health professionals who overwhelmingly support legalized abortion and who have proved willing to set aside their medical scruples whenever legalized abortion appears threatened. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has been conspicuously active whenever the link between abortion and breast cancer has received any notice. In November 1994, when Dr. Janet Daling of the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle reported a significant, 50 percent increased risk of breast cancer with induced abortion, the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* printed the study with an accompanying editorial that impugned Daling's findings. And from the *Washington Post* to *Elle* magazine, the popular press reported explanations and denials from government experts. In the February 1995 issue of *Elle*, for example, Assistant Surgeon General Susan Blumenthal criticized Daling for failing to take into account the effect of birth control pills, a patent falsehood that Dr. Blumenthal's office has declined to retract.

In January 1996, convinced by Daling's study and other work, a pro-life group rented advertising space in rapid-transit stations in Washington, Philadelphia, and other major cities, putting up posters warning about the increased risk of breast cancer that accompanies abortion. Within days after the signs went up, the order came from then-Assistant Secretary of Health, Dr. Philip Lee, to remove them. The case is presently on appeal in the federal courts.

More recently, in December 1996, another study in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* described a 90 percent increase in the risk of breast cancer in Dutch women who had had abortions. But this time even the authors impugned their study, calling their own findings flawed, an artifact likely due to something called "reporting bias." In an accompanying article, the National Cancer Institute editorialists—taking the opportunity to attack the review my colleagues and I had published two months earlier—developed this theme, blaming any significant link between abortion and breast cancer on "a systematic bias" that "may affect all (or nearly all) studies."

"Reporting bias" is the sort of statistical artifact that must always be considered a possibility in any epidemiological study that depends on subjects' recollections. In any study—especially of a subject as sensitive as abortion—inaccuracies may exist in the reports of the women interviewed. If, for example, the women with breast cancer are more honest in reporting abortions than the women without breast cancer, then there will appear, as a result of this reporting bias, an apparent but false increase in the risk of breast cancer. Researchers must be vigilant about reporting bias, not only because the exposure in question is particularly sensitive, but also because such risk elevations as 30, 50, or even 90 percent are relatively small in epidemiological terms—and even a little bias can go a long way in producing a false result.

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The trouble is that, despite the certainty at the National Cancer Institute that this bias exists in breast cancer research, the only credible evidence ever produced is against it. Thus, for example, Dr. Daling and her colleagues tested for its presence in their 1994 study by looking at cervical cancer incidence (which is known *not* to be associated with abortion) and found no apparent risk elevation and no evidence of reporting bias. In defense of the reliability of the same 50 percent risk elevation for breast cancer Daling had found, a 1995 study on women in Greece noted the "widespread social acceptance" of induced abortion in Greece and reviewed other studies on Greek women to support the conclusion "that healthy women in Greece report reliably their history of induced abortion." In 1989, a study of New York women based on *prospective* computer-registry data (as opposed to the usual retrospective data based on subject recall, and therefore automatically free of the possibility of reporting bias) found a significant 90 percent breast cancer risk increase with induced abortion.

The notion of abortion reporting bias in connection with breast cancer has its source in a 1989 study and a 1991 paper by a Swedish group that compared two studies on the same population of Swedish women, one based on patient recall and the other on prospective computerized records. Seven Swedish breast cancer patients reported having had abortions for which there was no computer record, and were thus declared to have "overreported" their abortions (i.e., made them up). Relying upon this apparent phenomenon, the authors of the 1996 study of Dutch women ascribed to reporting bias the risk increase among women from a more religious, conservative region of Holland, when compared to women from a more secular, liberal region. One ought to be suspicious of the inexplicable nature of this claimed bias, which on any straightforward reading ought to run the other way—religious women claiming *fewer* abortions than they really had, not *more*. But even with this problem set aside, the Dutch study's dismissal of its own findings of a 90 percent risk increase turns out to be false to its own method, which found no evidence of bias between case and control subjects who had been matched by region. In order to create the claimed bias, the Dutch researchers were compelled to mismatch results with regions until they found their desired evidence of difference in reporting.

The lack of credible evidence for reporting bias notwithstanding, conclusive proof about the abortion-breast cancer link—as nearly all researchers agree—can come only from studies using prospective data like the 1989 New York study that found a 90 percent increased risk of breast cancer attributable to induced abortion. This was the importance of the "definitive" Danish computer-registry study led by Dr. Mads Melbye and published in the January 1997 *New England Journal of Medicine*. The Melbye study claims to be definitive not only because of the prospective nature of the data, but also because of its size, encompassing all 1.5 million women born in Denmark between 1935 and 1978, over 280,000 of whom have had legal abortions, and over 10,000 of whom have had breast cancer. The study concludes that "Induced abortions have no overall effect on the risk of breast cancer," having found an overall risk increase associated with abortion of exactly 0 percent.

The study falls apart, however, upon the close scrutiny made possible by the substantial body of published data concerning the same population of Danish women. Although abortions have been legal in Denmark since 1939, the Melbye study used computerized abortion records beginning only with 1973. The authors understate this weakness of the study, acknowledging only that "we might have obtained an incomplete history of induced abortions for some of the oldest women in the cohort." But a check of pre-1973 abortions shows that they misclassified some 60,000 women who had abortions as not having had any.

Yet even this egregious misclassification is not the most significant flaw in the study. The generally long latency of breast cancer means that the study largely compared younger women (with more abortions and fewer incidents of breast cancer) to older women (with more incidents of breast cancer and fewer abortions). The authors are aware of this potential source of error. But in correcting for it by adjusting for a "cohort effect," they made an astonishing blunder. The "cohort effect" is the acknowledged fact that the incidence of breast cancer has been generally rising for most of this century. The problem, however, is that the causes of this rising incidence are unknown, and since the frequency of induced abortion has similarly risen through most of this century, abortion may well be a cause of the cohort effect. And if abortion is indeed a factor in the risk of breast cancer, the cohort adjustment the Melbye study performs necessarily eliminates its effect—making the 0 percent increased risk a virtually guaranteed result.

And there is plenty of evidence that induced abortion is indeed the missing cohort factor. First, Melbye and his colleagues show enough data to compute the unadjusted relative risk, and this calculation shows a 44 percent risk increase (it is extremely disturbing, from a scientific point of view, that this number did not appear in the paper). Second, a 1988 study of part of the same cohort of Danish women found a 191 percent increased risk among childless women (the only women reported on) who had any induced abortions. Third, a close examination of the legal abortion rate in Denmark since 1939 shows a striking parallel with the rates of breast cancer incidence. The abortion rate peaked in 1975 and the average age at which a

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Danish woman had an abortion is twenty-seven, which means that the greatest number of abortions were performed on women born around 1948. But the latest age-specific data in Denmark show that the incidence of breast cancer is maximal for women born between 1945 and 1950, and is on the decline for women born more recently. A proper analysis would likely show a significant breast cancer increase in the neighborhood of 100 percent for induced abortion.

Abortion is not a controversial subject in Denmark and Dr. Melbye seems a sincere and competent man. But his study reveals the entrenched bias in favor of the view that abortion is harmless to women, a bias that is decades old. One in every six Danish women has had at least one abortion, which means that complicity in abortion decisions is pervasive in the society. How willing can members of such a society be to acknowledge that they have put themselves and those they love at risk of one of the most dreaded, life-threatening diseases that a woman can get? What hope is there in such a society for scientific integrity to overcome a witting or unwitting wall of denial?

Fortunately, abortion is still a controversial subject in America, but denial from high places of its harmfulness to women is hard to miss—even in the partial funding for the Melbye study provided by the U.S. Department of Defense. If we are to maintain scientific integrity in medical research, we must denounce wherever it appears the manipulation of studies to provide socially desired results. The point of maintaining scientific integrity in medicine, of course, is not just to preserve the abstract notion of truth, but to save the lives of both women and their babies.

Joel Brind *is Professor of Biology and Endocrinology at Baruch College of the City University of New York and Editor of the new* Abortion-Breast Cancer Quarterly Update.

Darn Dogwoods!

He did it again,
splashing snow on those
stunted beaming bushes who
then lord it over our
more stately
monochromes.

They're spring
showoffs really—sniffing
at our more glorious
double-season changes
of superior
glowing

virescence.
Then they have
the audacity to litter
the forest floor
with all those
silly petals!

And don't
weary me again
with tale their quad
blooms are reminiscent
of our Savior's
cross;

stuntedness
a penalty for
having furnished
the wood He
was hung
upon.

Pine
told me on
good authority
it was oak. Those
snips would say
anything

to explain
away their beauty.
Ask them why in the fall
their ruddy rusted leaves
are setting for near
perfect

crimson berries!
I'd say
Somebody's
playing favorites.

Rick Gutknecht

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The Liberalism of John Paul II

Richard John Neuhaus

It is no secret that when *Centesimus Annus* appeared in 1991 some of us viewed it not only as an important teaching moment but also as a vindication of our understanding of Catholic social doctrine. There was a great temptation to declare triumphantly, "I told you so." That temptation was not always resisted as it should have been. This contributed to a degree of polarization over the encyclical. Liberals who paid any attention at all to the document were not convinced of the demise of socialism and lifted up passages that they thought supportive of their collectivist dream. But, for the most part, liberals paid little attention. As with the other great teaching documents of the pontificate of John Paul II, the appearance of *Centesimus Annus* was for most liberal Catholics a nonevent.

The stronger polarization developed between certain conservatives and those called neoconservatives, the former accusing the latter of hijacking this pontificate, and *Centesimus Annus* in particular, in order to gain magisterial legitimation for what is called democratic capitalism or liberal democracy. The neoconservatives are described, and sometimes describe themselves, as advancing "The Murray Project," referring to the effort of the late Father John Courtney Murray to square Catholic teaching with the American democratic experiment. The conservative critics—for instance, Professor David Schindler of the John Paul II Institute in Washington, D.C.—accuse Murray and those like him of selling out authentic Catholic teaching to a desiccated and desiccating liberalism.

Schindler writes in his recent book, *Heart of the World, Center of the Church*: "My argument, then, offered in the name of de Lubac and Pope John Paul II as authentic interpreters of the Second Vatican Council, has two main implications. First, it demands that we challenge the regnant liberalism which would claim that it (alone) is empty of religious theory in its interpretation of the First Amendment and indeed of Western constitutionalism more generally. Secondly, it demands that we seek a truly 'Catholic Moment' in America [as distinct from Richard John Neuhaus' 'Catholic Moment'], understood, that is, not as another Murrayite moment but as a truly Johannine (John Paul II) moment. This means that we must expose the con game of liberalism which enables it, precisely without argument, to privilege its place in the public order."

In his book, and repeatedly in the pages of the English edition of *Communio*, of which he is the editor, Schindler assaults the liberal "con game" in which he thinks some of us are complicit. I confess that I find this somewhat frustrating. In my experience, David Schindler is a friendly fellow. We have engaged our differences in both private and public exchanges, after which he ends up agreeing that there is no substantive disagreement between us. I always look forward to our next amicable conversation, and brace myself for his next public attack.

I do think there is an important difference between us. It is not, or at least it is not chiefly, a difference over Catholic theology. The difference, rather, is that Prof. Schindler and those who are associated with his criticism tend to put the worst possible construction upon the liberal tradition, and on the American cultural, legal, and political expression of that tradition. In doing so, I believe Prof. Schindler and his friends hand an undeserved victory to those who interpret the liberal tradition in ways that we all deplore. With John Courtney Murray, I suggest that our task is to contend for an interpretation of liberalism that is compatible with the fullness of Catholic truth.

Richard John Neuhaus *is Editor-in-Chief of* First Things. *This article is adapted from a paper delivered at a conference sponsored by the Ethics and Public Policy Center marking the fifth anniversary of* Centesimus Annus.

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There is no doubt that the American experiment is constituted in the liberal tradition. Since we cannot go back to the eighteenth century and reconstitute it on different foundations, we must hope that the foundations on which it is constituted are not those described by Ronald Dworkin, John Rawls, Richard Rorty—and David Schindler. Toward the end of understanding the liberal tradition as consistent with Catholic truth, *Centesimus Annus* is an invaluable guide.

Liberalism, needless to say, is a wondrously pliable term. There is the laissez-faire economic liberalism condemned by Leo XIII in *Rerum Novarum*, and also by John Paul II. In American political culture that liberalism goes by the name of libertarianism, and, despite its many talented apologists, including Charles Murray (no relation to John Courtney), it has never acquired many adherents beyond what Russell Kirk called its "chirping sectaries." In the American context, libertarianism remains in the largest part a thought experiment for college sophomores of all ages.

The liberalism so fiercely criticized today is not limited to libertarianism. At the hands of the critics, the republican liberalism of virtue and the communitarian liberalism of Tocquevillian civil society come off little better than libertarianism. David Schindler has good ecumenical company in attacking liberalism tout court. Stanley Hauerwas, a Methodist theologian at Duke University, has in books beyond number been assaulting, hammering, pummeling, and battering it with magnificent aplomb. Liberalism and all its ways and all its pomps has more recently taken a severe beating from Oliver O'Donovan, Regius Professor of Theology at Oxford. Despite his Anglican bias against what he calls "papalism," I most warmly recommend his book, *The Desire of the Nations: Rediscovering the Roots of Political Theology* (Cambridge University Press). It is not only a devastatingly convincing critique of a certain version of liberalism, but also a fascinating examination of what the idea of "Christendom" might mean in our moment of modernity's discontent.

We can summarize some of the salient points in the indictment offered by the Christian critics of liberalism and modernity (the two terms usually being more or less interchangeable). Whether it be the enchanted G. K. Chesterton, the near-magisterial Alasdair MacIntyre, the caustic George Grant, the swashbuckling Stan Hauerwas, the daring O'Donovan, or the melancholic David Schindler, the indictment tends to be much the same. Lest there be any misunderstanding, let me say that I find myself in warm agreement with the indictment of *a certain kind* of liberalism. The contention turns on what we mean by liberalism.

The first charge is that Christian thinkers have been too ready to trim the Christian message in order to accommodate the ruling cultural paradigm of liberalism. I definitely agree. That, however, is more accurately seen as an indictment of Christian thinkers, not of liberalism. If we are hesitant to declare in public that Jesus Christ is Lord, the fault is in ourselves. We cannot plead the excuse that liberalism made us do it. John Rawls or Richard Rorty or the Supreme Court, claiming to speak in the name of liberalism, may have intimidated us, but the fault is with our timidity.

Other points in the indictment of liberalism are variously expressed. It is charged that liberalism is purely procedural. Excluding the consideration of ends, liberalism claims to be only about means, but in fact disguises its ends in its means. Thus Father Murray's construal of the First Amendment as "articles of peace" is in fact—or so the indictment reads—a surrender to the inherently antireligious bias of liberalism. In short, the claimed "neutrality" of liberalism is anything but neutral. Liberalism, it is charged, is premised upon the fiction of a "social contract" that is, in turn, premised exclusively upon self-interest. Liberalism denies, or at least requires agnosticism about, transcendent truth or divine law, recognizing no higher rule than the self-interested human will. Liberalism's idea of freedom is freedom from any commanding truth that might impinge upon the totally voluntaristic basis of social order.

These liberal dogmas, it is further charged, are inextricably tied to the dynamics of capitalism. Liberal dogma and market dynamics are the mutually reinforcing foundation and end of a social order that is entirely and without remainder in the service of individualistic choices by the sovereign, autonomous, and unencumbered Self. The wages of liberalism is consumerism, and consumerism is all-consuming. The end result is what some critics call "liberal totalitarianism."

It is an impressive indictment, and it is supported by impressive evidence. Against each of the distortions mentioned, I have written at length, as have others who are favorably disposed toward liberal democracy or, as some prefer, democratic capitalism. But that is just the point: one may argue that the indictment is an indictment of the *distortions* of liberalism. If that is the case, we are contending for the soul of the liberal tradition.

A personal word might be in order. In the 1960s I was very much a man of the left. Not the left of countercultural drug-tripping and generalized hedonism, but the left exemplified by, for instance, the civil rights movement under the leadership of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In the latter half of the 1960s this began to change with the advent of the debate over what was then called "liberalized" abortion law. By 1967 I was writing about the "two liberalisms"—one, like that earlier civil rights movement, inclusive of the vulnerable and driven by a transcendent order of jus-

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tice, the other exclusive and recognizing no law higher than individual willfulness. My argument was that, by embracing the cause of abortion, liberals were abandoning the first liberalism that has sustained all that is hopeful in the American experiment.

That is my argument still today. It is, I believe, crucially important that that argument prevail in the years ahead. There is no going back to reconstitute the American order on a foundation other than the liberal tradition. A great chasm has opened between the liberal tradition and what today is called liberalism. That is why some of us are called conservatives. Conservatism that is authentically and constructively *American* conservatism is conservatism in the cause of reappropriating and revitalizing the liberal tradition.

Toward that end, *Centesimus Annus*, as I said, is an invaluable guide. The document is often described as an encyclical on economics, but I suggest that is somewhat misleading. Certainly it addresses economic questions in considerable detail. One reason for that is that the encyclical is commemorating and developing the argument of *Rerum Novarum*, which was much and rightly concerned about the problems of the worker and the threat of class warfare in an earlier phase of capitalism. Another reason for the focus on economics is that the Pope is addressing the situation following the Western-assisted suicide of the Soviet empire, and that empire had justified itself by a false ideology that reduced the human phenomenon to the economic dimension. In explaining why that ideology is false and in pointing the way toward a more promising future, it was necessary for the encyclical to pay close attention to economics.

It is more accurate, however, to say that *Centesimus Annus* is about the free society, including economic freedom. The discussion of *Rerum Novarum*, of the right understanding of property and exchange, and of the circumstances following the momentous events of 1989, culminates in chapters V and VI, "State and Culture," and "The Person Is the Way of the Church." When we consider the encyclical in relation to American liberalism, several cautions are in order. *Centesimus Annus* is not a free-standing text. It must be understood within the large corpus of this most energetic teaching pontificate, and, beyond that, in the context of modern Catholic social doctrine dating from *Rerum Novarum*. Even further, it must be understood in continuity with the Church's teaching ministry through the centuries. Then too, we must always be mindful that the Pope is writing for and to the universal Church.

Keeping these and other cautions in mind, however, one cannot help but be struck by how much *Centesimus Annus* is a reading of "the signs of the time" with specific reference to the world-historical experiences of this century. The encyclical is not historicist, in the narrow sense of that term, but it is firmly and determinedly located in a historical moment. And, while it is not a free-standing text, one can through this one text trace the controlling themes of this teaching pontificate. Although it is written to and for the universal Church, the Church in each place is invited and obliged to read the encyclical as though it were addressed to its own specific circumstance.

Moreover, I am confident that we as Americans make no mistake when we think that the American experiment is a very major presence in *Centesimus Annus*. After all, the Western democracies, and the United States most particularly, are the historically available alternatives to the socialism that so miserably failed. I think it true to say that in this pontificate, for the first time, magisterial teaching about modernity, democracy, and human freedom has a stronger reference to the Revolution of 1776 than to the French Revolution of 1789. It is, then, neither chauvinistic nor parochial to read *Centesimus Annus* with particular reference to the American experiment. On the contrary, it is the course of fidelity, made imperative by the duty to appropriate magisterial teaching to our own circumstance, and by the powerful awareness of the American experiment in the mind of the encyclical's author.

There is no more common criticism of the liberal tradition than that it is premised upon unbridled "individualism." *CA* speaks of the "individual" and even of the "autonomous subject" (13), but most typically refers to the "person." Citing the earlier encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*, John Paul writes that "this human person is the primary route that the Church must travel in fulfilling her mission . . . the way traced out by Christ himself, the way that leads invariably through the mystery of the Incarnation and Redemption." He then adds the remarkable statement, "This, and this alone, is the principle which inspires the Church's social doctrine." (53)

This, *and this alone*. He writes, "The Church has gradually developed that doctrine in a systematic way," above all in the past century. Very gradually, we might add without disrespect. In the later encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*, John Paul pays fulsome tribute to modernity and its development of the understanding of the dignity of the individual and of individual freedom. Individualism is one of the signal achievements of modernity or, if you will, of the liberal tradition. Nor should we deny that this achievement was effected in frequent tension with, and even conflict with, the Catholic Church. One important reason for such conflict, of course, was that the cause of freedom was perceived as marching under the radically anticlerical and anti-Christian banners of 1789. It is a signal achievement of this pontificate that it has so clearly replanted the idea of the individual and of freedom in the rich soil of Christian truth from which, in its convoluted and conflicted development, it had been uprooted. Only as it is deeply rooted in the truth about the human person will the flower of freedom flourish in the future.

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It is a mistake to pit, as some do pit, modern individualism against a more organic Catholic understanding of community. Rather should we enter into a sympathetic liaison with the modern achievement of the idea of the individual, grounding it more firmly and richly in the understanding of the person destined from eternity to eternity for communion with God. The danger of rejecting individualism is that the real-world alternative is not a Catholic understanding of *communio* but a falling back into the collectivisms that are the great enemy of the freedom to which we are called. As *CA* reminds us, "We are not dealing here with humanity in the 'abstract,' but with the real, 'concrete,' 'historical' person." The problem with the contemporary distortion of the individual as the autonomous, unencumbered, sovereign Self is not that it is wrong about the awesome dignity of the individual, but that it cuts the self off from the source of that dignity. The first cause of this error, says *CA*, is atheism. (13)

"It is by responding to the call of God contained in the being of things that man becomes aware of his transcendent dignity. Every individual must give this response, which constitutes the apex of his humanity, and no social mechanism or collective subject can substitute for it." (13) The great error of both collectivist determinism and of individualistic license is that their understanding of human freedom is detached from obedience to the truth. (17) Culture is a communal phenomenon, but it is in the service of the person's response to transcendent truth. In one of the most suggestive passages of the encyclical, John Paul writes, "At the heart of every culture lies the attitude a person takes to the greatest mystery: the mystery of God. Different cultures are basically different ways of facing the question of the meaning of personal existence." (24)

We are brought back to the remarkable proposition about the flourishing of the human person. "This, and this alone, is the principle which inspires the Church's social doctrine." This is not individualism in the pejorative sense, but it is commensurable with the modern achievement of the idea of the individual. It is commensurable with the constituting ideas of the American experiment, in which the state is understood to be in the service of freedom, and freedom is understood as what the Founders called "ordered liberty"—liberty ordered to the truth. And there are, as the Declaration of Independence declares, "self-evident truths" that ground such freedom and direct it to the transcendent ends of "Nature and Nature's God."

The theistic references of the Declaration are not, as some contemporary commentators claim, simply crowd-pleasing asides but are integral to the moral argument of the document—and the Declaration is, above all, a moral argument. Moreover, such references must be understood in the context of the innumerable statements by all the Founders that this constitutional order is premised upon moral truths secured by religion. The American experiment is constituted by a Puritan-Lockean synthesis that in recent decades has been bowdlerized to fit the secularist prejudices of our academic elites. It is imperative that we challenge the bowdlerized version of the founding that has been fobbed off on several generations of students, from grade school through graduate school, and take our American history straight.

It will be protested by some that this is mere "civic religion." But we have missed the point of *CA* if we think there is anything "mere" about sustaining a public order that acknowledges the transcendent source and end of human existence. Of course such formal acknowledgment provides only a very thin and attenuated theology, but it creates the condition within which the Church can propose a rich and adequate account of the human story. But that, it is objected, is just the problem: In a liberal society the Church can only propose its truth, putting the gospel on the market place as one consumer item among others.

This is a frequently heard objection, and we have to wonder what people mean by it. Are they suggesting that the Church should coerce people to obey the truth? In the encyclical on evangelization, *Redemptoris Missio*, the Pope says, "The Church imposes nothing, she only proposes." She would not impose if she could. Authentic faith is of necessity an act of freedom. If we fail to understand this, it is to be feared that we fail to understand what John Paul calls the principle which alone inspires the Church's social doctrine. The Church is to propose—relentlessly, boldly, persuasively, winsomely. If we who are the Church are not doing that, the fault is not with liberalism but with ourselves. Although the Church's message provides a secure grounding for liberalism, liberalism is not the content of the Church's message. It is simply the condition for the Church to invite free persons to live in the *communio* of Christ and his Mystical Body, which communion is infinitely deeper, richer, and fuller than the liberal social order—or, for that matter, any social order short of the right ordering of all things in the Kingdom of God.

Few things are more important to the free society than the idea and reality of the limited state. However much the courts and secular intellectuals may have denied it in recent decades, the American order is inexplicable apart from the acknowledgment of a sovereignty higher than the state. As in "one nation under God," meaning a nation under judgment. Christians understand and publicly declare that higher sovereignty in the simple proposition, "Jesus Christ is Lord." It is not necessary for the state to declare that Jesus Christ is Lord. Nor, at least in the American circumstance and any forseeable reconfiguration of that circumstance, is it desirable that the state declare that Jesus Christ is Lord. The

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role of the limited state is to respect the political sovereignty of the people who acknowledge a sovereignty higher than their own. As the encyclical states, "Through Christ's sacrifice on the cross, the victory of the Kingdom of God has been achieved once and for all." (25) That victory denotes the highest sovereignty by which the state is limited, and the proclamation of that victory is the most important political contribution of the Church. In a democratic society that has been effectively evangelized, citizens do not ask the state to confess the lordship of Christ. Their only demand is that the state be respectful of the fact that a majority of its citizens confess the lordship of Christ. We affirm not a confessional state but a confessional society, always remembering that the state is the servant of society, which is prior to the state.

The Church also makes an invaluable political contribution by insisting upon the limits of politics. The great danger, says *CA*, is that "politics becomes a 'secular religion' which operates under the illusion of creating paradise in this world. But no political society . . . can ever be confused with the Kingdom of God. . . . By presuming to anticipate judgment here and now, people put themselves in the place of God and set themselves against the patience of God." The power of grace "penetrates" the political order, especially as the laity take the lead in the exercise of Christian public responsibility, but there can be no pretensions that earthly politics will create the final right order for which our hearts yearn. (25)

As in the liberal order the ambitions of the state are checked by the democratic assertion of a higher sovereignty and by the limits of politics itself, so those ambitions are checked by diverse "sovereignties" within society itself. With Leo XIII, John Paul declares that "the individual, the family, and society are prior to the State." The state exists to serve and protect individuals and institutions that have priority. (11) Human persons and what I have elsewhere described as the mediating institutions of society "enjoy their own spheres of autonomy and sovereignty," according to *CA*. (45) These spheres of sovereignty are smaller than the state, but they are not lower than the state.

The striking modernity of the encyclical's argument is evident also in its understanding of the state. Unlike earlier formulations, the state is not situated within a hierarchy of authorities, descending from the rule of God to the rule of the lord of the manor. The argument of *CA* is profoundly democratic. Christ is sovereign over all, and that sovereignty is asserted by those who acknowledge the sovereignty of Christ. The unlimited state, whether based on Marxist atheism or the engineering designs of Enlightenment rationalism, aspires to totalitarian control. "Thus there is a denial of the supreme insight concerning man's true greatness, his transcendence in respect to earthly realities, the contradiction in his heart between the desire for the fullness of what is good and his own inability to attain it and, above all, the need for salvation which results from this situation." (13) The limited state is kept limited by the democratic assertion of the transcendent aspiration of the human heart.

In this connection, John Paul infuses the doctrine of subsidiarity with new vitality by the use of a most suggestive phrase, "the subjectivity of society." "The social nature of man . . . is realized in various intermediary groups, beginning with the family and including economic, social, political, and cultural groups which stem from human nature itself and have their own autonomy, always with a view to the common good." (13) In the free society, the state is one institution, one player, among others. It is an indispensable player in its service to all the other players, but it is subject to the subjectivity of society, and the subjectivity of society consists in free persons and free persons in community living in obedience to God and solidarity with one another. There is in *CA* and in other writings of this pontificate, I believe, a fresh and compelling theory of democracy that awaits systematic development by the next generation.

There must be a cultivated skepticism about the state if it is to be kept limited. "To that end, it is preferable that each power be balanced by other powers and by other spheres of responsibility which keep it within proper bounds." (44) Skepticism regarding the power of the state does not mean, however, skepticism about the purposes that the state is to serve. Quite the opposite is the case. Only when those purposes are clearly and unambiguously asserted can the state be held accountable. Section 45 of *CA* clearly and unambiguously challenges the point at which contemporary liberalism has most severely distorted the meaning of democracy in the liberal tradition. Here is the crucial paragraph:

> Authentic democracy is possible only in a state ruled by law, and on the basis of a correct conception of the human person. It requires that the necessary conditions be present for the advancement both of the individual through education and formation in true ideals, and of the "subjectivity" of society through the creation of structures of participation and shared responsibility. [Then comes the vital passage.] Nowadays there is a tendency to claim that agnosticism and skeptical relativism are the philosophy and the basic attitude which correspond to democratic forms of political life. Those who are convinced that they know the truth and firmly adhere to it are considered unreliable from a democratic point of view, since they do not accept that the truth is determined by the majority, or that it is subject to variation according to different political trends. It must be observed in this regard that if there is no ultimate truth to guide and direct

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> political activity, then ideas and convictions can easily be manipulated for reasons of power. As history demonstrates, a democracy without values easily turns into open or thinly disguised totalitarianism.

The importance of this paragraph, and its pertinence to our American situation, can hardly be overestimated. The dogmatic insistence upon agnosticism in public discourse and decision making has created what I have called "the naked public square." People who, like the Founders, hold certain truths to be self-evident are today "considered unreliable from a democratic point of view." In a usurpation of power that indeed threatens a "thinly disguised totalitarianism," the courts have presumed to declare that the separation of church and state means the separation of religion and religiously grounded morality from public life, which means the separation of the deepest convictions of the people from politics, which means the end of democracy and, in fact, the end of politics. Thank God, we are not there yet. But it is the direction in which we in the United States have been moving these last several decades, and it is the real and present danger requiring those of us called conservatives to rally to the defense of the liberal tradition.

In contending for the soul of liberalism, we must be sympathetically alert to some of our fellow citizens who honestly believe that any appeal to transcendent truth poses the threat of theocracy. John Paul recognizes how widespread that misunderstanding is, and therefore immediately follows the above passage with this:

> Nor does the Church close her eyes to the danger of fanaticism or fundamentalism among those who, in the name of an ideology which purports to be scientific or religious, claim the right to impose on others their own concept of what is true and good. Christian truth is not of this kind. Since it is not an ideology, the Christian faith does not presume to imprison changing sociopolitical realities in a rigid schema, and it recognizes that human life is realized in history in conditions that are diverse and imperfect. Furthermore, in constantly reaffirming the transcendent dignity of the person, the Church's method is always that of respect for freedom.

Let it be candidly said that that has not always appeared to be the Church's method. We should not leave it to others to point this out. In *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* (As the Third Millennium Nears) and on many other occasions, the Pope has candidly called upon Christians to acknowledge the ways that, individually and corporately, they have failed to respect the dignity and freedom of others. That acknowledgment must, however, be joined to two other propositions. First: When, in the name of democracy, transcendent truth is excluded from the public square, the result is "open or thinly disguised totalitarianism." Second: Democratic totalitarianism, which recognizes no higher truth than majority rule, creates a treacherously dangerous circumstance for minorities.

We could go on to examine other themes of *Centesimus Annus* that can be correlated with the liberal tradition, rejuvenating that tradition and turning it in more promising directions. There is, for instance, the connection between freedom and virtue, both personal and public, which must evoke intensified effort toward the evangelizing and reevangelizing of society. The stakes in that effort are very high, as John Paul sets forth with such urgency in *Evangelium Vitae*'s dramatic portrayal of the conflict between "the culture of life" and "the culture of death." But these and other questions are for another time. Indeed, as I have suggested, it will be the work of generations to systematically unfold and disseminate the remarkable teaching ministry of this pontificate.

I began with some comments on *Centesimus Annus* and what some call "The Murray Project." Nobody should try to usurp the authority of magisterial documents in order to advance particular intra-Catholic partisan arguments. Before the magisterium of the Church we are all learners. Our purpose must be *sentire cum ecclesia*, to think with the Church. I know that I have learned from and have been changed by *Centesimus Annus*, and I trust that will continue to be the case. In no way should the encyclical be interpreted as an unqualified affirmation of the American experiment. In many ways, it is a searing criticism of what that experiment has become under the influence of contemporary liberalisms. Yet I do believe *CA* is commensurate with the American liberal tradition, and in critical continuity with the great work of John Courtney Murray. I believe that is the case, and I hope that is the case, for we have not the luxury of imagining the reconstitution of this social and political order on foundations other than the liberal tradition.

As sympathetic as we may be to some of the determined critics of liberalism, we do well to remind ourselves that all temporal orders short of the Kingdom of God are profoundly unsatisfactory. When we survey the depredations and ravages of our social, political, and religious circumstance, it is tempting to look for someone or something to blame. It is easy to say, "Liberalism made us do it." But liberalism is freedom, and what we do with freedom is charged to our account. For American Christians, and for Catholics in particular, there is nothing that has been done wrong that could not have been done differently. Amidst the depredations and ravages of an American experiment that once exalted the human spirit, and may do so again, *Centesimus Annus* invites us to reappropriate and rebuild the liberal tradition. FT

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A Bible Fit for Children

Alan Jacobs

In a famous passage from *Science and the Modern World,* Alfred North Whitehead gives this counsel to scholars in the various historical disciplines: "Do not chiefly direct your attention to those intellectual positions which [controversialists] feel it necessary explicitly to defend." More important, and more telling for the deep understanding of a culture, are those "fundamental assumptions which adherents of all the variant systems within the epoch unconsciously presuppose. Such assumptions appear so obvious that people do not know what they are assuming"—indeed they do not know *that* they are assuming anything—"because no other way of putting things has ever occurred to them." Similarly, in *The Discarded Image* C. S. Lewis notes the disturbingly common phenomenon of coming across passages in old books that *seem* perfectly transparent to understanding but in fact are hiding something: "We turn to the helps only when the hard passages are manifestly hard. But there are treacherous passages which will not send us to the notes. They look easy and aren't."

I think of these wise warnings when, as I often have cause to do, I ask my students what Jesus meant when he said to the disciples, "Unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3). For everyone *knows* what these words mean; they are utterly transparent, and even the shy students readily respond. There is a cluster of concepts that tend to gather around this saying like iron shavings around a magnet: children are innocent, I am told, they have simple faith, they have a sense of wonder. I have received the same set of responses when I have asked the question in church. And people are so easily confident in their responses that they are often surprised to note that Jesus himself employs none of these concepts.

Instead, he speaks of children in terms of *humility;* but he employs this notion in a peculiar way. "Whoever humbles himself like this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." Is Jesus saying that to enter heaven one must be as humble as the child whom Jesus presents to the disciples? Or is he saying that one must treat oneself as though one were no more than a mere child in order to enter heaven? The latter option, though no one I have ever talked to has come up with it unaided, seems more likely. After all, in most societies children do not have the full rights and privileges of adults; they are not free agents, they are under the authority of their elders. One can readily see how accepting for oneself such a status would be congruent with Jesus' insistence that the first shall be last and the last first. And indeed many, if not most, biblical scholars have linked Jesus' statement to the low place children held in the culture of his time, in which people normally thought of children as unformed, or not fully formed, adults, who gain in personal value as they gain in ability and strength. But when I suggest to my students that Jesus may simply have been referring to the social inferiority of children, their enforced rather than natural lowliness, I am greeted with looks of perplexity or dismay or outright disapproval.

We might ask further whether humility is a notable feature in the children we have known. As sweet and gentle as my four-year-old son is, I would not immediately think of him as humble; he tends, for instance, to be much more attentive to the shortcomings of others than to his own, and such a tendency hardly makes for humility. When people make their common assumptions about what Jesus meant when he exhorted us to become like children, they do not seem to be thinking about the actual behavior of actual children. Rather, an idealized picture of the Innocent Little One intrudes between their reflections and their experience. Lacking such an idealization, Augustine in his *Confessions* can observe the actions of infants and small children and see in them

Alan Jacobs *is Associate Professor of English at Wheaton College.*

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clear testimony to the doctrine of Original Sin:

> I wanted to express my desires to those who could satisfy them; but this was impossible, since my desires were inside me and those to whom I wished to express them were outside. . . . And so I used to jerk my limbs about and make various noises by way of indicating what I wanted. . . . And when people did not do what I wanted, either because I could not make myself understood or because what I wanted was bad for me, then I would become angry with my elders for not being subservient to me, and with responsible people for not acting as though they were my slaves; and I would avenge myself on them by bursting into tears. This, I have learned, is what babies are like, so far as I have been able to observe them.

This passage, and others like it, strike most modern readers as merely perverse; but it is not evident that their views fit the observable evidence better than Augustine's.

I do not wish to overstress, after the manner of radical historicism, the differences between our world and that of the early Church, as though a Hobbesian pessimism about children held utter sway then and a Rousseauian optimism now. Augustine himself, in one of his homilies on the Gospels, acknowledges that children can be humble, while some people in our time take a view not unlike that seen in the *Confessions*. Conversely, as late as the eighteenth century John Wesley, in a sermon on the education of children, could simply *assume* that every parent knew that children suffer from pride, willfulness, and a "natural propensity to seek happiness in gratifying the outward senses." But a genuine transformation in our view of children has come about nonetheless.

Phillippe Ariès, in his fascinating history, *Centuries of Childhood*, contends that the belief in the innocence of childhood was almost unknown at the end of the sixteenth century, but had become a commonplace by the end of the seventeenth. "Commonplace" seems to me too strong a word, but then my knowledge comes chiefly from English culture, while almost all of Ariès' examples are French. It seems that the first time this note is fully and clearly sounded in English culture is the end of the seventeenth century, in the works of Thomas Traherne. Traherne was an ecstatic and visionary writer whose works were not discovered until 1896, when a collector browsing through a London bookshop came across the notebook in which they had been scribbled. In verse and in prose, Traherne celebrates the perfect innocence of childhood: "an antepast of Heaven sure!" he calls it in a poem entitled, precisely, "Innocence." "Within, without me, all was pure: I must become a child again." And in what came to be called his *Centuries of Meditations*, he loses himself in a rhythmical trance of remembered perceptions: "The corn was orient and immortal wheat, which never should be reaped, nor was ever sown. I thought it had stood from everlasting to everlasting. . . . The city seemed to stand in Eden, or be built in heaven. . . . Certainly Adam in Paradise had not more sweet and curious apprehensions of the world than I when I was a child."

If this sounds familiar, that is because it is an almost eerie prefiguration of the Romantic rhetoric of childhood. If we did not know that Traherne's work was utterly lost until a century ago, we might suspect that Wordsworth, in his "Intimations" ode, was a mere plagiarist:

> Not in entire forgetfulness,
> And not in utter nakedness,
> But trailing clouds of glory do we come
> From God, who is our home:
> Heaven lies about us in our infancy!

Indeed, it is only with the advent of Romanticism that the innocence of childhood assumes a talismanic status: in a historical world that always disappoints (especially in the disastrous and bloody aftermath of the French Revolution, for which hopes had been so high) the pull of nostalgia for an earlier and purer state becomes almost irresistible. In the terms favored by W. H. Auden, the Utopians of the eighteenth century become the Arcadians of the nineteenth: and while the Arcadia they long for can be historical, it is more often personal. "Carry me back, Master," Auden mockingly writes (and he is mocking himself, for he recognized Arcadianism as one of his strongest temptations), "carry me back to the days before my wife had put on weight, back to the years when beer was cheap and the rivers really froze in winter. . . . Give me my passage home, let me see that harbor once again just as it was before I learned the bad words." Ah, childhood! Perhaps when he wrote these words Auden (a new resident of the United States) had already noted that Arcadianism is—even more than its near relative, Harold Bloom's beloved Gnosticism—the "American religion."

One early (and distinctly American) version of Romanticism was the Transcendentalism of New England; one of the key figures in that movement was A. Bronson Alcott, best known today as the father of Louisa May Alcott. Bronson Alcott participated to an almost Trahernian degree in the Romantic cult of the innocent child, which for him took a curious and interesting form. In 1835 he founded a school in Boston called the Temple School, and a key part of the weekly routine involved a time for Alcott to gather his pupils together and discuss the Gospels. Alcott did not lecture, but rather asked questions, trying to follow the Socratic example ("Plato for thought, Christ for action!" was one of his mottoes).

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He saw to it that these "conversations with children on the Gospels," as he called them, were recorded by a secretary; soon thereafter he had them published.

These "conversations" have recently been reissued under the title *How Like an Angel Came I Down*, the phrase taken, perhaps not surprisingly in light of the little history I have been recounting, from Thomas Traherne's poem "Wonder." The reissue came about because of the enthusiasm of Alice O. Howell ("therapist, author, teacher"), who provides an excitable introduction—"Oh, Boston, where is your innocence now!"—filled with statistics provided by the Children's Defense Fund, references to Carl Jung, and, yes, extended quotations from Wordsworth's "Intimations" ode. Also noteworthy are the facts that this reissue is published by the Lindisfarne Press, which is associated with the Anthroposophical Society, and that it features a forward by the poet and translator Stephen Mitchell, who has recently found it necessary to repeat the Jeffersonian project of producing an edition of the Gospels with everything that could offend a decent-minded liberal neatly excised. (The chief difference is that Mitchell had the resources of a publishing empire, HarperCollins, behind his work, while Jefferson had to make do with scissors and paste.) In such details the cultural history of the modern West is writ small.

The conversations themselves, though, are absolutely fascinating, because the children are fascinating. Here is a passage chosen utterly at random:

> MR. ALCOTT. What do you mean by Judgment Day?
> ELLEN. The last day, the day when the world is to be destroyed.
> MR. ALCOTT. When will that day come?
> CHARLES. The day of judgment is not any more at the end of the world than now. It is the judgment of conscience every moment.
> MR. ALCOTT. Ellen is thinking of burning worlds, open books, a Judge, an assembled universe.
> LUCIA. I think the day of judgment is when anyone dies; the conscience judges.
> JOSEPH. Mr. Alcott, it does not mean any particular day; but they wanted to express how very certain and real the judgment is which goes on all the time, and so they expressed it in this way, for no words can exactly express it.
> JOHN B. Whenever we do wrong it is a day of judgment to us.
> MARTHA. Death is necessary for complete judgment.
> EDWARD J. Death is necessary for any judgment.
> AUGUSTINE. I do not think the world is to be destroyed.

All of these children were between seven and twelve years old (except for Edward J., who despite his Kafkaesque outlook on life is listed as "under seven"). Through the course of the book Charles emerges as one of the most interesting and resourceful, and it is not uncommon for him to establish a direction for the others to follow, as he does here. Charles seems in many ways a prototypical nineteenth-century Bostonian, capable at one point of insisting that the phrase "Father and Son" does not mean "God and Jesus" but rather "God and any man," and at another point of saying, "I think the mission of my soul is to sell oil."

But the most extraordinary child of all was the youngest, six-year-old Josiah Quincy, one of the several Josiah Quincys in Bostonian history. (The previous Josiah, his father, had been Mayor of Boston, as had his grandfather, who also served as the president of Harvard.) In the foreword Mitchell notices this, as I suppose every reader would, and quite properly singles out this amazing outburst from Josiah:

> MR. ALCOTT. Can you say to yourself, I can remove this mountain?
> JOSIAH. (*Burst out*) Yes, Mr. Alcott! I do not mean that with my body I can lift up a mountain—with my hand; but I can feel; and I know that my conscience is greater than the mountain, for it can feel and do; and the mountain cannot. There is the mountain, there! It was made, and that is all. But my conscience can grow. It is the same kind of spirit as made the mountain be, in the first place. I do not know what it may be and do. The body is a mountain, and the spirit says, be moved, and it is moved into another place. Mr. Alcott, we think too much about clay. We should think of spirit. I think we should love spirit, not clay. I should think a mother now would love her baby's spirit; and suppose it should die, that is only the spirit bursting away out of the body. It is alive; it is perfectly happy; I really do not know why people mourn when their friends die. I should think it would be a matter of rejoicing. . . . I cannot see why people mourn for bodies.
> MR. ALCOTT. Yes, Josiah; that is all true, and we are glad to hear it. Shall some one else now speak beside you?
> JOSIAH. Oh, Mr. Alcott! Then I will stay in at recess and talk.

(Incidentally, Josiah stuttered, for which the recording secretary, Elizabeth Peabody, was thankful, since it enabled her to preserve Josiah's comments with greater accuracy than the speed of the children's responses would normally allow for.) Though the other children are apparently rather in awe of Josiah's ardent eloquence and enjoy listening to him talk, Alcott often has to remind him that it would be

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good for others to contribute. Once, when Josiah is expositing his theory that "temptation is always necessary to a real prayer," Alcott gently asks, "Now will you let someone else speak?" But Josiah exclaims, "Oh, Mr. Alcott, I have not half done." All the same, the others do speak, though typically in single sentences, and occasionally they are overwhelmed by one of Josiah's extemporaneous cadenzas. At the end of one conversation Alcott asks, "Have all been interested today?"

> MANY. Very much interested.
> JOSIAH. I have been interested, because I have had a chance to talk so much.
> MR. ALCOTT. Do you think some others were not interested, because they had no chance to talk?
> JOSIAH. The next time I will not speak till recess.

It is tempting indeed to compile an anthology of the Collected Eruptions of Josiah Quincy—Emerson knew the child at roughly this time, and called him a "youthful prophet," who had "something wonderful and divine in him"—but I will confine myself to noting that the first discourse I quoted is very characteristic of Josiah (and in a different way of Alcott as well). For all of Josiah's verbal precocity, his inability to comprehend grief is an indelible mark of his youth. His remarkable conceptual sophistication is not, and perhaps could not be, accompanied by the empathy that we learn, if we learn it at all, from hard experience. George Steiner is almost certainly correct when he says that there are only three human pursuits which can produce true prodigies, because proficiency in them does not rely on such experience: music, mathematics, and chess.

Now, what are the concepts with which Josiah is so fully at home? Not surprisingly, they are Alcott's concepts. Alcott believed the Platonic doctrine of knowledge as recollection, and therefore, as I have noted, prided himself on his Socratic reticence. He fully believed that he merely allowed the thoughts of his pupils to emerge; indeed, when he became aware that he was directing, he censured himself and determined to pull back. (Today we would call him a "facilitator," God forgive us.) But he does make sure, here, to tell Josiah "that is all true." And it is interesting to note how fully Josiah has absorbed the Gnostic elevation of the spirit and denigration of the body so common to Romanticism in all its manifestations.

In a conversation about the Nativity narrative, Josiah offers a characteristically extravagant and virtually Manichean theory: "The spirit comes from heaven, and takes up the naughtiness out of other people, which makes other people better. And these naughtinesses put together make a body for the child; but the spirit is the best part of it." Alcott doesn't exactly disagree; he presses the children for their reactions to Josiah, and when they start to wander from that point, he (untypically) draws them back to it. Then he tells them what he thinks, which is that "God makes my spirit, and my soul all the time makes my body." This does not exactly make the body a compound of "naughtinesses," but it does place the body at one remove from God's creative activity, just as in the *Timaeus* Plato invents a Demiurge to make the world so that the Deity itself is not defiled by contact with matter.

Children, in the view I have been describing, seem to be more spiritual than material: "Heaven lies about us in our infancy!" But they grow more fleshly and matter-bound as they get older. Alcott's students believe this about themselves.

> JOSIAH. [at the end of one of his briefer discourses] You must be full of spirit.
> MR. ALCOTT. Are any of you full?
> AUGUSTINE. When I was a little baby I was full.
> THE OTHERS. We all were.

Charles takes this belief to its logical culmination when, near the end of one conversation, he pronounces this astonishing dictum: "God is babyhood." (To which Alcott replies, "There is truth in that, I believe; and yet it is language so liable to be misunderstood, that it had better not be used.") But now these children have lost that divine Spirit, which is the Spirit of Innocence, and by repentance they try to get it back. It is not clear that Alcott or his secretary Elizabeth Peabody believes that such a reclamation project can be successful. And I would be willing to bet that the book's new editor, Alice O. Howell, does not so believe. For it appears that she has no interest at all in what happened to these children when they grew up. Howell tells us that one child, George Kuhn, died of consumption while a student at Harvard, and that his sister Martha "grew up to be a distinguished linguist." But not one word is spared for the futures of the others, though the book has a formidable apparatus, with forewords, introductions, notes, appendices, bibliographies, and so on. It is as though the children cease to be interesting when they cease to be children. "So that with much ado I was corrupted," writes Traherne, "and made to learn the dirty devices of this world." In the end, writes Wordsworth, the child comes to "Forget the glories he hath known, / And that imperial palace whence he came." Little ones who have forgotten that palace and learned those "dirty devices" are no longer little ones; they have no more to teach us.

But who could fail to wonder what became of the marvelous Josiah Quincy?

One may, perhaps, see signs of Josiah's inevitable fall in his comment about the "naughtinesses" that make bodies for us. How does a six-year-old know of such things unless he has eaten from the Tree of the

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Knowledge of Good and Evil? And once a child has done that, as Ivan Karamazov says to his brother Alyosha, he is one of us—he has defaulted on our pity and deserves whatever suffering he gets. Ivan's heart breaks only for those who have not "eaten the apple."

Josiah's theory about the origins of the body disturbed Elizabeth Peabody. She thought it "very remarkable," but counseled Alcott to excise it from the transcript of the conversations, or at least to remove it to an appendix. He did the latter, but that theory, along with some other comments made by the children in a discussion of Mary's labor and delivery—which Alcott did his best to spiritualize—scandalized many Bostonian readers, whose assumption was that Alcott had become a purveyor of obscenity to children. After all, if children are such pure and innocent beings, and have to be taught "dirty devices," then there are only two ways to account for Josiah's little theory: an adult has taught him wickedness, or he has of his own accord fallen into it. And who would want to think the latter about a six-year-old? The Temple School was out of business within a year of the publication of these conversations.

It is not clear how one can evade such uncomfortable questions when discussing religion with children, unless by eschewing all references not only to wickedness but also to bodily existence. Yet how can Jews and Christians preserve their children in such ignorant bliss while teaching them the Bible? For the Bible is full of bodies and wickedness. Would it not be strange to say that some children pluck the forbidden fruit of knowledge from the tree called Holy Writ? Yet every thoughtful Jewish or Christian parent wonders about just this.

My son Wesley has two so-called "children's Bibles": one he cares little for, perhaps because his burgeoning aesthetic sense rebels against the unprofessional quality of the illustrations, which are by other children. The second he likes a lot, referring to it as "my Bible"—a locution he doesn't use for any of his other books, which indicates that he has picked up on the distinctive way that Christian adults talk about Bibles. When he asks me to read his Bible to him, he always wants to begin with the story of Noah and the Ark, which is just fine, since the death of a world of people and animals is not mentioned in this version; but after Noah's rainbow appears the mood of the text darkens rather considerably. Of course, the most gruesome tales are left out: we have no crayonishly colorful depictions of Jael nailing Sisera's head to the ground with a tent spike, or of Elisha unleashing two ornery she-bears on a pack of smart-mouthed brats.

Still, the list is a rather dismal one. Here is Isaac narrowly avoiding being slain on an altar by his father, followed soon thereafter by the various lies and deceptions of Jacob; here are Jacob's sons selling their brother Joseph into slavery; here are the plagues visited upon Egypt, culminating in the death of Pharaoh's young son. I find myself trying to skip forward to the less unpleasant parts, like the manna in the wilderness, or Samuel's anointing of David, or even David's slaying of Goliath. Unfortunately, Wesley is the sort of child who likes to go through a book from beginning—or at least from the point at which he chooses to start—to end; so we can end up wrestling ludicrously over control of the pages. How can such disturbing tales (I ask as I try to pry Wesley's little fingers loose from an account of Samson's massacre of the Philistine army) contribute to my child's moral and spiritual development?

Of course, the makers of such books have to deal with the same problems, as can clearly be seen in Ruth B. Bottigheimer's recent history, *The Bible for Children.* Some decisions come, as it were, premade: no ceremonial law, no prophecy, no apostolic theology, no apocalyptic visions. Indeed, as Bottigheimer points out, what we call "children's Bibles" are in fact retellings of selected narrative passages from Scripture, often accompanied by "commentary, verses, summaries, questions and answers, or bits of ancient history." But the question of *which* narrative passages to include can never be avoided. And if you think of children as pure and innocent—or even if you think of them as merely too immature or inexperienced to make proper sense of some things—you will want to exclude passages that might endanger their hearts.

But what Bottigheimer's history makes clear is that earlier ages did not always think as we now do about what children can profitably read. Indeed, her project began when, while researching a book on the brothers Grimm, she came across a children's Bible put together by Jacob Grimm:

> I could hardly believe my eyes. Here, in a book for children, was Lot offering his virgin daughters to a rapacious mob, Abraham ready to slit Isaac's throat, and Joseph sexually importuned by his master's wife. David committed adultery with Bathsheba, tried to palm her ensuing pregnancy off on her husband, and, when that failed, had him traitorously dispatched so that he could marry Bathsheba himself.

Later in the book, Bottigheimer shows that passage after passage which no modern compiler would dream of including in a Bible for children—for fear of lawsuits, if for no other reason—was widely accepted in earlier centuries. For instance, Jael's pegging of Sisera's head to her floor "appeared in nearly every seventeenth-century German Bible for children, and the same held true in France." Most writers of that time heartily approved of her deed, though one English commentator (in a passage Bottigheimer doesn't appear to catch the humor of) suggested that, "though this act of Jael was of a most extraordinary

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nature, and God, for wise purposes, gave a sanction to it, yet we must not think of making it a precedent."

Increasingly, says Bottigheimer, the compilers of children's Bibles grew uncomfortable with Jael, and began to surround her story with critical commentary (for instance, more than one gives her story the title "Jael's Treachery"); but the awkwardness of this eventually leads to the situation we now have, the exclusion of the story from compilations. Perhaps we do not think that children can appropriate whatever profitable lessons may be taken from this episode; perhaps we are not sure that *we* can appropriate them. Bottigheimer—whose research is almost always far superior to her interpretations of it—thinks that the story disappeared because society grew increasingly uncomfortable with the notion of a mere woman being the savior of Israel. But the status of women in Western society began measurably to *improve* at precisely the time that the story of Jael started to fade from the compilations. A much more likely explanation derives from the cultural history we have been tracing here: a growing belief in the innocence of children leads to a growing determination to shield them from stories that might corrupt or wound that innocence.

Jael's case is an unusual one. Problems usually arise for the makers of children's Bibles not because they are uncertain how to interpret a story, but rather because they do not know how bluntly they dare relate that story. No one questions the evil of David's adultery with Bathsheba; but how do you explain that adultery to children who may not yet know anything about human sexuality? Some writers, Bottigheimer shows, said that David "took another's wife," leaving the concept of "taking" ambiguous. Others (especially in the nineteenth century) made no reference whatsoever to the sexual nature of the sin: David committed "a shocking offense," one said, while another noted still more vaguely that "he grew tyrannical and began to sin." In my son's Bible, David slays Goliath, becomes friends with Jonathan, and helps Jonathan's son Mephibosheth. Then he dies and Solomon takes over. Perhaps that's for the best; perhaps a four-year-old cannot quite grasp how David can be called "a man after God's own heart" and yet fall so terribly, nor comprehend the depths of David's repentance. But the essential shape of spiritual life is traced in that story, and I wonder if it is ever too early for a child's mind to be directed along that path, to be trained in that shape.

So, to the story of Jael I give a definite thumbs down; to the story of David's crimes I give a fairly strong thumbs up. One could go up and down the list of potential inclusions casting one's vote, but if one is a Christian, sooner or later one must confront the most fundamental dilemma of all: the Crucifixion. In Wesley's Bible, it is the only act of violence pictorially represented. The nearest approximation is a picture of Samson wrestling with the lion, and in that it looks like the two are playing. But at the end of the Gospel stories, on facing pages, we see Jesus reclining limply on the laid-out Cross as a soldier prepares to drive a nail into his left palm, and then Jesus hanging on the upraised Cross, the four nails clearly visible, his face showing sadness more than pain.

My cursory research, coupled with my reading of Bottigheimer, suggests that this is the modern norm. Few contemporary versions for children avoid representing Jesus on the Cross, though some tend to downplay the violence and brutality of the event: for instance, the illustration by the wonderful Tomie de Paola in his collection of Bible stories views the Cross from behind. Older versions often were more sobering, not primarily because of their illustrations but rather because of their sometimes hideously detailed texts. Modern Christians, it appears, don't think their young children need to know just how horrific death by crucifixion is; but they do not see how an acknowledgment and a representation of this particular Crucifixion can be avoided. (Incidentally, Bronson Alcott's Temple School closed before he could get as far as the Passion narratives.)

If children are going to be introduced to Christianity at all, we seem to think, the death of God's Son on the Cross must be a part of that introduction. Perhaps the knowledge that at the center of our faith, at the center of our account of the world, lies such a death—perhaps this knowledge weighs too heavily upon a child. To paraphrase T. S. Eliot, after such knowledge, what innocence? And yet Christians, if we are to be Christians, have no other story to tell; when we stop telling of this death, even to our children, I fear that we are lost. What remains for us is what remains for Alyosha Karamazov. In a book that contains the most unsentimental, realistic, and yet warmhearted portrayal of children in all of literature, he unflinchingly listens to his brother Ivan's cruelly detailed accounts of the sufferings of "the innocent ones"; he faithfully and comfortingly keeps his watch over the dying boy, little Ilusha; and at the end he gathers together "the boys" who have come to love him, so that he can proclaim to them the terrible and wonderful truth which alone can heal their grief: though there *must* be death, there *will* be Resurrection. Absent such knowledge, what redemption?

As for Josiah Quincy, well, a quick trip to the library to consult the *Dictionary of American Biography* assuaged my curiosity. After taking bachelor's, master's, and law degrees from Harvard (where else?), he briefly pursued a legal practice before devoting himself full-time to writing: poetry, fiction, reportage, essays. He married and had five children, the oldest of whom (named Josiah, to no one's surprise) became Mayor of Boston. Our Josiah died in 1910 at the impressive age of eighty. The *Dictionary* tells me that he was "distinguished 'of mien and carriage,' democratic and friendly, and modest and unworldly to a rare degree." I for one am glad to hear it. FT

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The Jews as the Christians Saw Them

Robert Louis Wilken

For two generations Christian theology has been engaged in a fundamental rethinking of Christianity's relation to Judaism and to the Jewish people. This work has been carried out by biblical scholars, historians, theologians, educators, and bishops and other leaders of Christian communions. It has dealt with technical points of biblical exegesis, profound questions of dogmatic theology, and, not least, with how words and images and ideas influence the attitudes of the faithful.

Whether one thinks of the decree *Nostra Aetate* of Vatican Council II and other Catholic statements over the last two decades, the various declarations of the World Council of Churches and Protestant denominations, or more recently the historic meeting of Orthodox Christians and Jews in Athens in 1993, the depth and seriousness of Christian engagement with the Jews is unprecedented in Christian history. Something new and extraordinary has taken place in our lifetimes. Think for example of the historic visit of Pope John Paul II to the Jewish synagogue of Rome in 1986 where he spoke of the Jews as "our dearly beloved brothers," or his words to the Jews when visiting Germany in 1980 that the covenant with the people of God is "never revoked by God."

We must not, however, forget that this new movement of the Spirit was born out of Jewish suffering and of the struggles of the Jewish people. The occasion for the Church's reconsideration of her relation to the Jews was the Holocaust. The first books and articles that laid the foundation for what followed were written in the late 1940s. To be sure there were some earlier voices, Christian thinkers who had begun to write about Christianity's relation to the Jewish people in the decade before the war, notably John Oesterreicher, Erik Peterson, Jacques Maritain, and Henri de Lubac. But the great outpouring of Christian reflection did not begin until after the destruction of six million Jews.

ROBERT LOUIS WILKEN *is the William R. Kenan, Jr. Professor of the History of Christianity at the University of Virginia.*

The other factor that awakened Christian thinking was the establishment of the state of Israel. For the first time since antiquity the Jews were able to reestablish Jewish life and institutions under Jewish rule in the Land of Israel. Jews, as it were, returned to history, and Christians began to look at the Jewish people, as well as the Bible and Christian theology, with fresh eyes. Jacques Maritain, for one, thought it providential that the 1962-1965 Vatican Council II was convened so shortly after the return of the Jews to the Land of Israel in 1948: "They mark, each in its own way, a reorientation of history."

It is no longer possible to think about Christianity without reference to the Jews. For too long it was assumed that the only form of "Judaism" that was relevant to Christianity was the religion of ancient Israel: the Old Testament and Jewish beliefs and institutions as they existed before the rise of Christianity. But in the twentieth century, Christians can no longer ignore the fact of Jewish existence. Contrary to the expectations of Christians in antiquity, the Jewish way of life did not come to an end, and today, two thousand years after the coming of Christ, there exist Jewish communities that observe the ancient laws of Moses concerning the Sabbath, circumcision, diet, Passover, etc., in much the same way they were observed before the beginning of Christianity. Recognition of this historical *and* spiritual fact sets us apart from earlier generations of Christians.

The destruction of the city of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, the end of temple worship and the demise of the priesthood, the subjugation of the Land of Israel to the Romans, all of which seemed permanent, led Christians to think that the Jewish way of life had been replaced by Christianity and that the Jews would no longer continue to exist as a distinct people. Most of the writings of the New Testament come from the period immediately after the destruction of the temple. And the earliest interpretations of the New Testament were written during the first three centuries of the common era when the Jewish people

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faced seemingly insurmountable challenges. They had to reconstitute their communal and religious life without the institutions that had served them for centuries, notably the temple, the priesthood, and the ritual laws that were dependent on the temple and priesthood. To the outsider it appeared that the Jewish way of life was in decline and destined for extinction.

What was written in the New Testament, particularly in the Gospels, and how it was interpreted in the early Church continues to inform and influence Christian attitudes and behavior. There can be no question that words and expressions found in the Bible, as interpreted in the Christian past, have been a factor in shaping hostile and malevolent attitudes and behavior toward the Jews. For that reason one of the ongoing tasks of Christian scholarship is to understand and interpret what the Church fathers had to say about the Jews and about the relation of Christianity to Judaism.

In some circles, the widespread criticism of the Jews in the early Church (and in Christian history) is evidence that Christianity is inherently anti-Jewish. That is, antipathy to Judaism is built into the very structure of Christian thinking and there is no way Christianity can relate positively to Judaism without purging itself of certain attitudes and beliefs inherited from the earliest period in Christian history. On occasion the term "anti-Semitism" is used to refer to this phenomenon, but the preferrred term is "anti-Judaism." Anti-Judaism accents religious and theological factors, anti-Semitism racial aspects of antipathy to the Jews. In the thought of the early Church, racial factors play no part in Christian understanding of Judaism.

Yet for those familiar with the scholarly literature on the topic, the term anti-Judaism is ill-chosen. In trying to say something true, namely, that Christian thinking was formed in dialogue and debate with Judaism, anti-Judaism accents only one side of the relation of Christianity to the Jews. To call Christianity anti-Jewish is to make it into the thing it struggled valiantly to resist.

One of the first major theological disputes in the early Church centered on the teaching of Marcion. Marcion thought that the Christian Gospel had nothing to do with the revelation of God to the Jewish people in the Old Testament. Christ, he said, had not been announced by the Law and the Prophets. The God of the Old Testament was a vengeful tribal God, whereas the God of the New Testament is a universal God of love and compassion. Marcion collapsed the dialectic that is built into Christianity's relation to Judaism and made Judaism into something alien. Had Marcion carried the day the Christian Bible would include only the books of the New Testament (and even that trimmed by Marcion's scissors). All Jewish elements would have been purged from Christian teaching.

One reason early Christian statements about the Jews seem stern is that they were trying both to meet the challenge of Marcion (which meant holding on to the Old Testament) and at the same time to demonstrate that a strictly Jewish reading of the Old Testament was insufficient.

The person who first addressed these issues at length was Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyon in Roman Gaul at the end of the second century. His most famous work was entitled *Against Heresies,* and was written to help the faithful in his church meet the objections of Marcionites and Gnostics (who also rejected the Old Testament and the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob). Marcion taught that the God of Abraham is a different God from the God of Jesus Christ, and hence Abraham would not share in the salvation offered by Christ. To answer Marcion's argument Irenaeus launches into a detailed exegesis of a series of texts from the Gospels. All deal in some fashion with whether Jesus transgressed the Law of Moses. One text is Luke 13:15-16, the story of the ruler of the synagogue who was indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath: "Then the Lord answered him, 'You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his ass from the manger, and lead it away to water it? And ought not this woman, a daugher of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?'"

For Irenaeus the key question is whether Jesus, by healing on the Sabbath, did something contrary to the Law. The Law, he says, prohibited work on the Sabbath and forbade carrying on any business activities; but it also encouraged people to attend to "matters of the soul," including actions of benefit to their neighbors. Hence it is permissible to do good for others on the Sabbath by healing. In this way Jesus "fulfilled" the Law "by carrying out the office of the high priest, praying to God on behalf of others, cleansing the lepers, healing the sick." The point to notice here is that Irenaeus' exegesis seeks to establish continuity between what Christ did and what was done by the ancient Israelites without reference to actual precepts of the Law, i.e., to legislation found in the Pentateuch. To accomplish this, he appeals to merciful actions that are parallel to what Christ did.

Irenaeus also cites Matthew 12:6, "There is here something greater than the temple." Irenaeus thinks that the use of the term "greater" is significant, because it puts the emphasis on what two things have in common. The words greater and less are not applied to things dissimilar, opposite, or contradictory, but used for things that have properties in common but differ in number and size. In the present discussion this means that what was given in Christ is similar to what was given by Moses: its source is "one and the same Lord," but Christ is "greater than the temple, greater than Solomon, greater than Jonah" because the gift that Christ confers is "his own presence and the resurrection from the dead."

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For Irenaeus the Christian confession that "God is one" is not simply a theological assertion that there is one God; it means that what was revealed to ancient Israel and recorded in the Old Testament, and what is revealed in Christ and recorded in the New Testament, are the work of the one God. The oneness of God is a unity that is found in God's self-disclosure in the course of history, in God's work of creation, in the calling of Israel, and in the sending of Christ. In response to Marcion and the Gnostics, Irenaeus argued that what was disclosed in Christ completed and perfected what was revealed to Israel.

To his fellow Jews, Jesus appeared to be a transgressor of the Law, but Irenaeus claims that what appeared to be a transgression, e.g., healing on the Sabbath, was in fact a deeper form of obedience, an obedience to the command recorded in Deuteronomy 6:5: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might."

At each point where the question of the Law arises in the Gospels, early Christian writers subordinate the Law to something else, whether "gentleness and mercy," "healing," "deliverance," or "love." Christianity rejects the Jewish law as a way of ordering Christian life. As Gregory the Great put it centuries later, the gospel teaches us *sine lege legaliter vivere*—"to live according to the Law without the Law."

One reason Christians appear anti-Jewish is that they have a quarrel with the Jews about the Law. Christians thought it was possible to have compassion or love and justice without the Law. It is not that Jews had no place for compassion or justice or love, or that Christians did not develop a system of law to regulate Christian life and behavior, but that each by starting at a different point subordinated the one to the other. Once Christians dispensed with the authority of the Law, it was inevitable that Jews, who continued to live by the Law, would be the object of criticism. By insisting on obedience to the "letter" of the Law, Jews, so Christians claimed, did not discern the deeper meaning of the Law.

Another topic on which the early Church is thought to be "anti-Jewish" is in its interpretation of the death of Christ. The proximity of Jesus' prediction about the destruction of Jerusalem to the account of his passion and death in the Gospels led Christian thinkers to see a connection between the relation between Jesus' death and the destruction of the Jewish temple in A.D. 70. With the help of ancient historians, Origen of Alexandria, the third-century biblical commentator, worked out the chronology of Daniel's prophecy so that it foretold the death of Christ and the destruction of the temple within the same seventy years. The passage in Matthew 24:15 about the desolating sacrifice was thus taken to refer to the death of Christ.

Although Origen is scrupulous in working out the historical details (on the basis of the book of Daniel) that link the death of Jesus and the destruction of the temple, it is just as significant that he was writing two hundred years after the events. As people looked back on the destruction of the temple, the gap between it and the death of Jesus seemed to diminish. From the perspective of two centuries the two events roughly thirty-five to forty years apart came to seem linked, the earlier the "cause" of the other.

For Christian thinking, it was noteworthy that the misfortunes of the Jews in the first century were not reversed in the second century and the years following. After the unsuccessful Bar Kochba revolt, the Romans had plowed over the Jewish city and built a new Roman town in the place where the Jewish city once stood. To non-Jewish observers, the Jewish city was a thing of the past. The historical contiguity of the death of Jesus and the demise of Jewish Jerusalem worked together to forge a new Christian interpretation. Origen writes:

> I challenge anyone to prove my statement untrue if I say that the entire Jewish nation was destroyed less than one whole generation later on account of these sufferings which they inflicted upon Jesus. For it was, I believe, forty-two years from the time when they crucified Jesus to the destruction of Jerusalem. Indeed, ever since the Jews existed, it has not been recorded in history that they were ejected for so long a time from their sacred ritual and worship, after they had been conquered by some more powerful people. . . . One of the facts which show that Jesus was some divine and sacred person is just that on his account such great and fearful calamities have now for a long time befallen the Jews. We will go so far as to say that they will not be restored again. [Origen has in mind Jesus' prophecy that "no stone will be left standing upon another."] For they committed the most impious crime of all when they conspired against the Savior of mankind in the city where they performed to God the customary rites which were symbols of profound mysteries. Therefore that city where Jesus suffered these indignities had to be utterly destroyed. The Jewish nation had to be overthrown, and God's invitation to blessedness transferred to others, I mean the Christians, to whom came the teaching about the simple and pure worship of God. And they received new laws which fit in with the order established everywhere. Those which had previously been given were intended for a single nation ruled by men of the same nationality and customs, so that it would be impossible for everyone to keep them now.

I am sometimes grateful that it was Origen (who was never canonized) who wrote these words, not St. Augustine. But what Origen says is not his private

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opinion. These views took root in Christian thinking and can be found in other more orthodox writers. His interpretation of the death of Jesus is possible only because of events that had taken place since the Bible was written, by what had happened to the Jews during the first and second centuries. Because the temple was destroyed (which made Jewish worship impossible) and the city laid waste (which deprived the Jews of their capital), it appeared not only that the Jewish way of life had came to an end but that the Jewish people would have no continuing existence.

It was customary in the ancient world and in the Bible to link fortune and misfortune with divine favor or vengeance. In the Old Testament the calamities that come upon the Jewish people are never random events without cause. Again and again the Scriptures attribute the misfortunes of the Israelites to their disobedience, their sin, their unbelief. There is nothing pernicious or malevolent as such about what Origen says here. But Origen was not a biblical prophet who was granted a vision of the divine plan. What he says is a deduction from the text based on later events, an interpretation imposed on the Gospels, not one that is rooted in the Scriptures. *Nostra Aetate* from Vatican II declares: "True, authorities of the Jews and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ; still, what happened in his passion cannot be blamed upon all the Jews then living, nor upon the Jews of today. Although the Church is the new people of God, the Jews should not be presented as repudiated or cursed by God, *as if such views followed from the holy Scriptures.*" (Emphasis added.) Origen, uncharacteristically, has abandoned his customary biblicism.

Even though Christian thinkers were critical of the Jewish way of life, they sensed that at the deepest level Christians and Jews belonged together. A good illustration is Origen's interpretation of John 4:24: "The hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father." Because of its contrast between worship in a particular place and worship "in spirit and in truth," this passsage was often cited to set Christianity over against Judaism. Jews worship God in a particular place with sacrifices, Christians offer God a spiritual sacrifice not bound to place. Origen, however, argues that the distinction Jesus draws is between pagans on the one hand, and Jews and Christians on the other. The pagans worship material objects, venerating pieces of wood or stones, Jews and Christians a transcendent spiritual God. Even though the Jews worshiped God with material sacrifices, they knew that they were offering their sacrifices to the "Creator of the universe." Both Jews and Christians are capable of recognizing the higher form of worship in spirit and in truth. The heretics cannot be right, says Origen, to deny "the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the fathers of the Jews," when the Savior says clearly that "salvation comes from the Jews."

The Jews were unique among ancient peoples, Origen argues, because they were the only society that "displayed a shadow of the heavenly life on earth." "No other God but the one supreme God was venerated" by the Jews and idol makers were banished from Jewish society. As support for this view Origen cites Deuteronomy's laws (4:16-18 and 11:19) against making graven images, and he praises the keeping of the Sabbath and the celebration of Jewish festivals because they provided leisure "to listen to the reading of the divine laws." From childhood Jews were taught to rise above "sensible" things and to think of God "not as existing in the sensible world but to seek him beyond material things." If one would compare the Jews to any other nation, "he would admire none more, since as far as it is humanly possible they removed everything not of advantage to mankind, and accepted only what is good."

Origen, of course, also says that there came a time when the Jewish way of life, which was confined to one people and one place, had to give way to a way of life that was adequate to other peoples and other lands. Yet even as he draws a contrast between the Jews and the Christians, he steadfastly maintains that the Jews are not to be placed in the same category as the idolaters, the pagans. In defending the worship of the one God, the chief goal of early Christian apologetics, Christian thinkers consider the Jews allies. This is a point of no little importance, for it suggests that even after the coming of Christ, on the matter of central importance, the spiritual worship of the one God, Jews and Christians are one.

Years ago, when I visited Jerusalem, it was my privilege to go to the synagogue with a friend, Rabbi Pinchas Peli, may he rest in peace. Some time later Peli came to the University of Notre Dame to teach for a semester, and he said that he wanted to visit my church. So one Sunday morning, when his wife Penina was in town visiting him, they joined our family for the Eucharist. It was a beautiful May morning and as we took our places in the pew, with warm spring sunlight streaming in the windows, I was delighted to have Pinchas and Penina sitting next to us, and eager to have them share in our worship.

It happened to be the fifth Sunday of Easter and the first lesson was from the book of Acts, chapter 13. That morning the lector was a talented young woman, an actress, who was a skilled and effective reader. The text was the account of the visit of Paul and Barnabas to the synagogue in Antioch in Pisidia in Asia Minor, and she read the passage with power and enthusiasm. The text says that on the Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of God, "but when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with jealousy, and contradicted what was spoken by Paul, and reviled him." When she reached

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the final sentences of the passage, she raised her voice to highlight the dramatic ending. "And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, 'It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles.'" To which she responded, "This is the Word of the Lord." And the congregation in return replied, "Thanks be to God."

It was as though Pinchas and Penina had been hit over the head with a sledgehammer. Penina began to cry and Pinchas was visibly agitated. But they stayed in their places and endured the rest of the service (which went on longer than usual because it was Confirmation).

After the service the Pelis were invited to our home for brunch and of course the chief topic of conversation was the reading from Acts. Penina was outraged and kept saying, "How can you continue to read such a passage after the Holocaust." Pinchas, with what seemed to me a keener spiritual insight and religious sensibility, had something quite different to say. "It is a hard saying. But it is part of the Bible, and one cannot, after all, take a scissors to the pages of the Scriptures. The only way to deal with such a text is through interpretation."

Interpretation has always been a matter of relating what is said in one part of the Bible to what one finds in other parts of the Bible, and relating that in turn to the faith of the community that lives out of the Bible, the Church. The Bible is not primarily a book from the past; it is a "carried book," in the words of Paul van Buren. What any given passage or book meant in its original setting is not the goal of interpretation. The historical task is only one aspect of the work of exegesis, and not the most important. It is introductory, propadeutic, and must be completed by relating the text to the rest of the Bible, to the Church's faith and life, and to what has taken place since the Bible was written.

If we view interpretation in this light, as a perennial task of the Christian community, we will be in a better position to give meaning to the passages in the Scriptures dealing with the Jews. Biblical exegesis is an art of discovery, of finding what the text discloses, and the best exegetes have always been those who are able to show that what is newly found was always there. What one finds will depend in large measure on what one is looking for. Paradoxical as that may seem, it states a profound truth and one that is known to every good expositor. The interpreter knows beforehand what to look for. What we have discovered in the Scriptures concerning the Jews differs from that of earlier generations, yet what they saw was more nuanced than is often recognized, and, even with its limitations, helps our generation discern the unique relation between Christians and Jews.

Early Christian thinkers knew that what set the Jews apart from others was that they worshiped God by observing the Law of Moses. When everything is stripped away, Christians, though critics of the Jews, understood the Jews in terms the Jews themselves could recognize. Only Christians are capable of this, for they grasp, as others cannot, what makes Judaism distinctive. As David Novak, a contemporary Jewish theologian, has written: "It is the Torah that makes Judaism stand out from anything in the human background." For Christianity, however, the Law is not the key to the Bible, Christ is, and for that reason Christian thinkers were critical of the central place of the Law in Jewish life. This is the great debate between Christians and Jews, a quarrel within the biblical tradition quite unlike debates with the Greeks and Romans, or later with Islam, or, more far afield, with Buddhism.

Yet, even while saying that there was something better than the Law, Christians recognized that the Law was a gift of God (Romans 9:1), and that the new way revealed in Christ was irrevocably bound to what had been revealed earlier. What St. John called "worship in spirit and in truth" was not simply a new spiritual worship (as Marcion had claimed). It was, in Origen's phrase, a "spiritual worship *of the Law*." Christians did not dispense with the books of the Law, they preserved them and interpreted them anew.

Christianity cannot be indifferent to the people of God who continue to observe the Law, even though their existence is an abiding spiritual challenge to Christianity. For if there is no worship according to the Law, if there is no Jewish community that observes the Law as an act of covenental obedience to the one God, what does it mean to say that there is a "spiritual worship of the Law"? In the most profound sense, this was what was at issue in the rejection of Marcion, as well as in Paul's words in Romans 11, cited in *Nostra Aetate*: "If some of the branches were broken off, and you, a wild olive shoot, were grafted in their place to share the richness of the olive tree, do not boast over the branches. If you do boast, remember it is not you that support the root, but the root that supports you."

At Vatican II it would have been easy to transpose Paul's present tense "support" into the past tense, "supported." It is thus of some theological significance that when *Nostra Aetate* paraphrases Paul's words it retains the present tense. The Church received the revelation of the Old Testament from the Jewish people, and she "cannot forget that she draws sustenance from the root of that good olive tree onto which have been engrafted the wild olive branches of the Gentiles." One might have expected, two thousand years later, to read, "*drew* sustenance" from the Jewish people. But what the decree says is, "draws sustenance from the root of that good olive tree." This is the mystery that is at the heart of Christian understanding of the Jews. FT

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Reforming Education: A Whole New World

Chester E. Finn, Jr.

Does Money Matter? Edited by Gary Burtless. *Brookings. 296 pp. $39.95.*

Catholic Education: Homeward Bound. By Kimberly Hahn and Mary Hasson. *Ignatius. 400 pp. $14.95.*

Choosing Schools: Vouchers and American Education. By Jerome J. Hanus and Peter W. Cookson, Jr. *American University Press. 179 pp. $39.50 cloth, $19.50 paper.*

The Schools We Need and Why We Don't Have Them. By E. D. Hirsch, Jr. *Doubleday. 317 pp. $24.95.*

Holding Schools Accountable. Edited by Helen F. Ladd. *Brookings. 382 pp. $42.95.*

Break These Chains: The Battle for School Choice. By Daniel McGroarty. *Prima Publishing. 258 pp. $23.95.*

Celebrating the Humanities. Edited by Michael Nelson. *Vanderbilt University Press. 269 pp. $28.95.*

Beyond the Classroom. By Laurence Steinberg. *Simon & Schuster. 223 pp. $22.*

We have come far since the early 1980s when *A Nation at Risk*, the warning sounded by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, was echoed by a dozen other reports and studies documenting the decrepitude of primary and secondary schooling in the United States and urging that something be done to restore its quality. This year's bumper crop of education books attests not only to Americans' continuing interest in these matters but also to a profound transformation in our understanding of what is wrong and what must be done differently.

Those who addressed this topic in 1983 generally assumed that we could solve the problem by raising standards for students and teachers, tempering our mania for equity with a concern for quality, and generally doing a better job of what we were already about. The popular reforms of the day included, for example, the National Commission's recommendation that every high school require all its students to study the "new basics": four years of English, three years of math, etc.

It seemed plenty bold at the time, emerging as we were from the decay of the 1970s, to be urged to downplay that decade's preoccupation with individual liberties and group rights, with counting-by-race and "doing your own thing," with boosting pupil esteem and mocking authority, with multiculturalism and diversity. We had been overindulging in educational and cultural bonbons and the effects showed around our national waistline. The reformers' insistence that we get ourselves into shape sounded severe but necessary.

Yet few of that era's prominent reformers seriously doubted that the public school "system" as we knew it was the proper vehicle for making those changes. They took for granted that the familiar machinery could produce better products if it were tuned up, adequately fueled, and properly directed. The requisite changes would be made by school boards and superintendents, principals and teachers, federal and state education departments, and would be "implemented" either in time-honored system-wide fashion or through equally familiar "pilot" and "demonstration" programs.

To be sure, restiveness could be detected in some

Chester E. Finn, Jr. *is John M. Olin Fellow in the Washington office of the Hudson Institute and President of the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation. From 1985 to 1988 he served as Assistant U.S. Secretary of Education.*

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precincts. Prominent "education governors" (including Arkansas' Bill Clinton, Tennessee's Lamar Alexander, New Jersey's Tom Kean, and South Carolina's Richard Riley) took a more active role in school policy than had their predecessors, while Bill Bennett and a few colleagues (myself included) were voicing more heretical notions at the national level. But in most respects the "reforms" undertaken by American education in the 1980s happened within the familiar power relationships, structural arrangements, and long-established ground rules of the public school system as it had existed since the turn of the century.

That is not to say they lacked variety and ambition. To mention just a few of the sometimes-incompatible improvements we have tried: more demanding high school course requirements; minimum competency tests required for graduation; higher standards for teachers, usually involving tests that they must pass in order to get certified (or hired); the spread of "alternative certification" and other unconventional ways of bringing people into the classroom; all kinds of new approaches to pupil testing and assessment; state takeovers of failing school systems; merit pay for teachers; a thousand different prizes and recognitions for individuals and schools that do an exceptionally good job; myriad business and university partnerships with schools and school systems; innumerable variations on the theme of school restructuring and site-management; extended days and year-round schooling; "patented" programs named after such education holy men as Theodore Sizer, James Comer, Howard Gardner, and Henry Levin; and lots and lots of experiments with technology.

Much was attempted. But a decade or so into most of these reforms, they haven't wrought much by way of improved results. Most indicators of education quality are flat—or the gains are canceled by losses. On the 1996 report of the National Education Goals Panel, for example, which monitors progress toward the ambitious objectives set by President Bush and the governors in 1989, seven arrows point up, eight down, and twelve indicate no change.

Many in the education establishment excuse the lack of progress by asserting that the reforms still haven't had sufficient time to work, haven't been adequately funded, haven't been accompanied by enough "staff development," have been undermined by complacent parents or retrograde political leaders, and so forth. Others explain that families are deteriorating, poverty is spreading, violence is worrying, morals are decaying—and it is not realistic to expect schools to do a better job until the whole society is overhauled. A few naysayers still insist that the "excellence movement" is itself unnecessary, that American schools are doing okay as is, and that the whole flap stems from a right-wing conspiracy to bring down public education.

Outside the establishment's citadels, however, an important breakthrough can be seen: widening awareness that the American educational system as we know it not only needs radical improvement but also needs its ground rules rewritten, its assumptions replaced, its structures overturned, and its power relationships transformed. In other words, the present school enterprise is doing poorly—and it is incapable of doing much better because it is intellectually misguided, ideologically wrongheaded, and organizationally dysfunctional. The spread of this awareness we might term the radicalization of American educational reform.

The shift is visible both in "respectable" books about education and in the notably bolder reform schemes and strategies that are making their way across the land. We are, in fact, seeing signs of a whole new paradigm of education, one that welcomes decentralized control, entrepreneurial management, and grassroots initiatives. Under this approach—which some call "reinventing" public education—public officials establish standards, make assessments, and hold schools accountable for meeting performance goals, but do not themselves run the schools.

The point deserves emphasis because it implies nothing less than the redefinition of what America means by "public school." For well over a century we took for granted that the phrase refers to a school run by the government in uniform, bureaucratic fashion and staffed by civil servants, nearly all of whom (for the past two decades) are also members of militant public employee unions. Today, however, we are coming to understand that a school can be "public" so long as it is open to all comers, financed with tax dollars, and accountable to some duly constituted public authority for its results. It need not be micromanaged by platoons of assistant superintendents; it need not be bent to the thousand clauses of teachers union contracts; and its teachers need not receive a government paycheck. It can, instead, be run by a committee of parents, a team of teachers, the local Boys & Girls Club, or even a profit-seeking firm.

In this second paradigm, education may be delivered through largely independent "charter" schools; "opt out" schools (as they say in England) that secede from their local education agencies and run themselves with what amounts to a block grant of funds; "home-schooling," whereby American parents are now teaching more than half a million youngsters around their own kitchen tables; "contract schools," in which a performance contract is negotiated between private educational managers (such as the Edison Project) and a public agency; and "choice programs" in which students use scholarships or vouchers to attend the schools of their choice, increasingly now including private and parochial as well as a pro-

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liferating array of public schools. The "reinvention" paradigm welcomes diverse schools organized and run by diverse entities. It takes for granted that students and families differ, too, and accordingly must be free to match themselves to the schools that suit them best. It requires less bureaucracy and fewer regulations because it rejects the proposition that schools must be centrally managed according to a single formula.

This new paradigm is in fierce competition with the older, more centralized, and top-down strategy that supporters (including the Clinton Administration) call "systemic reform." That's today's fancy term for keeping power where it has always been and trying to make the old machinery turn faster.

The two approaches overlap in part. Many supporters of the new paradigm also insist on externally prescribed standards and tests; they would, in effect, loosen up the means of education while maintaining some commonality with respect to its ends and the "accountability" mechanisms by which its performance is tracked. Conversely, some devotees of "systemic reform" are open to greater variety among schools and some decentralization of management. Thus President Clinton, for example, favors a tripling of the number of charter schools from the present five hundred.

The difference between the two strategies, however, remains profound: new paradigm people have great confidence in consumers, markets, and competition, and little faith in the instrumentalities of government, at least when it comes to improving education. They are educational Jeffersonians. "Systemic reformers," by contrast, are Hamiltonians, certain that strong central control of key decisions is vital if the enterprise is to succeed. Many "systemic" reformers also have close professional or political ties to the great vested interests of the education establishment, such as the two national teachers unions.

Thus the overlap fades as we move from quasi-governmental reform strategies, such as charter schools, toward the management of schools by private entrepreneurs and, especially, toward vouchers (the use of public funds to enable youngsters to attend private and parochial schools). That—as Daniel McGroarty illustrates in *Break These Chains,* his splendid account of voucher politics in Milwaukee—is a line that virtually none of the systemic reformers will cross and that their establishment allies will defend to the death. They are apt these days to tolerate limited school choice within the traditional public sector—magnet schools, for example, or the right of youngsters to attend public schools in other districts—but certainly not the kind that extends to private schools.

They are not happy with strong charter laws, either, the kind—such as Arizona's—that permit the full array of diverse organizations (including profit-seeking firms and former private schools) to establish charter schools pretty much as they see fit, to employ pretty much whomever they wish to teach in those schools, and to deploy their resources pretty much as they think best. That is much too loose for buttoned-up systemic planners and much too upsetting to established interests. They prefer the tamer sort of charter law—Rhode Island's won kudos in a recent report by the American Federation of Teachers—that restricts the number of schools and subjects them to many of the rules and procedures of conventional public schools, particularly in the area of personnel.

It is hardly surprising that the reforms the establishment finds most palatable are those that actually change very little. Rhode Island may have a charter law that the teachers union admires—but it does not have any charter schools. In Arizona, by contrast, more than 150 of these schools have rapidly sprung up, now enrolling 2 percent of the state's students. (Two percent may not sound like much, but a statewide shift of this magnitude from one kind of school to another within two years is in fact truly remarkable for the sluggish behemoth of U.S. public education.)

The demand is certainly present. Most charter schools have waiting lists. State charter programs are bumping against the numerical caps that legislators in many jurisdictions imposed as part of political deals struck with teachers unions and school board associations. Voucher programs—both the publicly financed kind now operating in Milwaukee and Cleveland and the privately funded variety found in several dozen communities—are virtually all oversubscribed. Unbar the gates that trap Americans in mediocre schools and significant numbers of them will stream out. What is more, those availing themselves of such opportunities are families ill-served by conventional schools. Whereas critics predicted that charter schools would "cream" the ablest, most fortunate, and best-parented kids, early evidence indicates that the opposite is happening. Several colleagues and I gathered data on 8,400 students attending thirty-four charter schools in 1995-96, a reasonable cross section of that year's charter universe. It turns out that 63 percent of them were nonwhite, more than half were poor enough to qualify for federally subsidized lunches, 19 percent had limited proficiency in English, and almost one in five had disabilities that affected their education. Four percent were former dropouts.

Far from enrolling the "best and brightest" or "richest and whitest," charter schools are attracting kids in acute need of alternatives, youngsters who were ill-served by regular schools and failed to thrive therein. We came to think of their students as "square peg" youngsters who do not fit into the round holes of conventional public (or private) schools.

Such a pupil population does not make it easy for teachers and administrators. One Arizona charter principal compared his school's admissions process

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to "the Mariel boat-lift: We got a lot of good ones but also a few crazies." One public school superintendent in Colorado observed that his schools were "much more tranquil now" because "the charter school rounded up all the troublemakers."

Despite this early evidence of their responsiveness to some of the neediest children in the land, charter schools still have dogged enemies in the education establishment. These foes have striven with fair success in most jurisdictions to keep charter schools few and weak: restricting their numbers, cramping their autonomy, and limiting their funds. That is why many state laws still make it difficult to launch viable charter schools. And those schools that do manage to get launched, far from being handed a bucket of public funds to do whatever they like with little or no accountability (as critics also allege), continue to be burdened by myriad rules and procedures. Nor are they fully funded. Most lack access to capital dollars and start-up moneys, and many are given less than their full share of operating funds or are forced to hand substantial chunks of their budgets back to the local district as rent or overhead. The upshot is that the majority of charter schools must make do with less money than standard public schools, while being expected to produce above-standard results.

Most charter foes are predictably to be found within the school establishment and on the political left. But some opponents are located on the right, people who believe that any "public" school, however nominally independent, is inevitably tainted by association with government and that any reform of the public education system, however superficially appealing, will only slow the quest for "true choice."

Yet the charter movement is spreading at a fast clip—with enabling laws passed by more than half the states—while the campaign for publicly funded vouchers is limping. A cloud of constitutional uncertainty still hangs over it, as state courts in Wisconsin and Ohio have reached opposite conclusions about the inclusion of parochial schools. While there is some reason to think a bare majority of present members of the U.S. Supreme Court would read the First Amendment to allow a well-crafted voucher program, a half century of Establishment Clause jurisprudence is so tangled and inconsistent that no one can be certain.

Four years of voucher experience in Milwaukee (in secular private schools) have also begun to yield enough data to give social scientists something to argue about with respect to the program's educational results. Early findings by the University of Wisconsin's John Witte indicated that voucher recipients and their parents were more content but that pupil achievement had not risen. More recent scholarship by Harvard's Paul Peterson and others indicates that, once a child has been in his voucher school more than two years, his test scores rise faster than those of similar children who remain in conventional public schools.

Ambiguous conclusions characterize several of the recent works of scholarship that try, with mixed success, to illuminate the performance of conventional public schools and the results of today's bolder reforms. Representative of the genre are a pair of Brookings volumes, each a collection of essays by various academics. *Holding Schools Accountable*, for example, edited by Duke economist Helen F. Ladd, is generally a cautious work, with every author's assertion offset by a commenter's hesitations, yet it breaks some new ground, especially in Caroline Minter Hoxby's essay on the effects of private school vouchers on schools and students. There, after a complex econometric analysis, we learn that a thousand dollar voucher would "increase private school access across both well-educated and more poorly educated families" and would produce a "disproportionate inducement for African-American students" to attend private schools. Moreover, the likely economic effects of such a program indicate that "it may be practicable for vouchers to discipline 'bad' public schools without disciplining their students."

Economists also dominate *Does Money Matter?*, subtitled "the effect of school resources on student achievement and adult success." Its seven chapters (including one by editor Gary Burtless and one by Rochester's Eric Hanushek) include much data and some fancy analysis, about half focused on the relationship between school resources and pupil achievement, the other half on the relationship between those resources and adult job market success. Like many such collections, there is no one conclusion. Trying to reconcile the disparate findings, Burtless finds that "on balance, the case for additional school resources is far from overwhelming. . . . Increased spending on school inputs without any change in the current arrangements for managing schools offers little promise of improving either student performance or adult earnings." For the Brookings Institution, that comes pretty close to a strong indictment of the system as we know it.

Temple University psychologist Laurence Steinberg levels his indictment in a different direction in the pages of *Beyond the Classroom*. He contends that the crisis in student achievement is due principally to a widespread decline in children's interest in education and their motivation to achieve in school. It is a problem of attitude and effort, especially among adolescents, whose peer culture sometimes frowns on academic prowess and whose parents are apt to be less involved with their schooling than that of their younger siblings. Steinberg is properly critical of "disengaged" parents—as many as a third of all parents, he estimates—who may want their kids to do well but lack the tools to help them.

This analysis leads Steinberg to view today's education-reform debates through a different lens. Of

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school choice, for example, he observes that the reason private schools rack up superior test scores may have more to do with the different peer group that families thereby obtain for their youngsters than with anything done by teachers and schools. "In all likelihood," he writes, "students who attend private and parochial schools are exposed to a higher proportion of peers with high educational aspirations and good study habits, and this exposure positively affects their own behavior, entirely independent of the instructional climate of the school. . . .When parents are choosing a school, they . . . are also choosing classmates—and potential friends—for their child."

Jerome Hanus and Peter Cookson are collectively ambivalent about school choice but each is blessedly clear about his own views. *Choosing Schools: Vouchers and American Education* is part of a useful American University-sponsored series of pro-con debates about policy controversies. Here Hanus takes the affirmative, arguing that "school choice is in the best tradition of American freedom," while Cookson finds in vouchers a death sentence for public education. Little new ground is broken, but a reader coming fresh to this dispute will find the book a welcome primer.

Oddly, the greatest treasure under this sea of books is also the coolest toward school choice. Nor is it written by a social scientist. E. D. Hirsch, Jr. is an English professor at the University of Virginia whose early work was devoted to the likes of Wordsworth and Blake and to titles such as *Validity in Interpretation.* For the past decade, however, he has been one of America's most influential and controversial school reformers. His popular 1987 book, *Cultural Literacy,* rocked the education world with the insight that youngsters need to acquire actual knowledge in school, not just "cognitive skills," if they are to be able to make any sense out of their world and if the American population is to retain a capacity to communicate across group divisions. Critics leaped to say Hirsch's notions reeked of "canonical knowledge," dull lists, and "dead white European males," and should be rejected for their political incorrectness and the violence they would do to tender minds that should instead be allowed to open like flowers. (Michael Nelson's quirky book, *Celebrating the Humanities,* a fifty-year account of one small college's splendid core humanities course, addresses similar debates at the postsecondary level.)

Hirsch has spent most of the intervening years introducing the "core knowledge" program to hundreds of U.S. schools, including many of the new charter schools. And now he has written today's most important education book, a superb explication and analysis of the misguided ideas and ill-founded research that dominate U.S. education. The chief culprit, which Hirsch terms "romantic progressivism," turns out to be supported by no serious research or evaluation, though it is deeply ingrained in the philosophy and ideology of the education profession. Hirsch is a gentle fellow, but in *The Schools We Need and Why We Don't Have Them* he gores a number of sacred oxen (e.g., Howard Gardner's celebrated theory of "multiple intelligences" and the belief that "standardized" tests cannot be good tests) and offers a thoroughly researched and well-founded set of alternatives.

Yet he is cool toward such "new paradigm" reforms as charter schools and vouchers on the grounds that today's education consumers do not possess nearly enough information about school performance to make sound choices. Nor does he find today's schools different enough from one another to give consumers much to select among. Not many parents can make a "discerning choice" so long as nearly every school that presents itself to them espouses "the same concern for 'the individual child and his or her needs,' for 'critical thinking,' 'self-esteem,' 'joy in learning,' 'respect for others'; and the same pledge by the school staff to use the latest research-based pedagogical methods, such as 'site-based decision-making,' 'cooperative learning,' 'child-centered pedagogy.'"

In Hirsch's view, we can fiddle with education policies until we exhaust ourselves, but we will never get "the schools we need," at least not on a large scale, until "the current intellectual monopoly is broken."

He's probably right about scale. Bullish as I am about charter schools, for example, and marvelous as the teaching-and-learning I've observed in most, five hundred such institutions is a minuscule portion of America's 83,000 schools. The youngsters who today benefit from vouchers can be counted in the thousands, while their public school classmates number in the tens of millions. And the enemies of such "new paradigm" reforms can be counted upon to continue doing their considerable utmost to keep these innovations within tight bounds.

Yet—at least on bright days—I sense that it is only a matter of time. To be sure, the old edifice of public education is large, but it is growing shaky. Today that shakiness is more intellectual than political. The teachers unions still wield great clout in many statehouses and—especially when they team up with school boards and superintendents—they can still limit the impact of reforms they dislike. Yet they are starting to find themselves playing more defense than offense in the policy arena. More remarkably, they seem to be losing the war of ideas. No longer, for instance, is school choice a fringe notion, consumer-responsiveness a heresy, or accountability a curse-word. The big question about vouchers nowadays is not whether there will be any but what state will next enact such a program. The major issues surrounding charter schools have to do not with their existence but with their numbers and the extent of their autonomy. I find it significant that

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today few in the education establishment openly reject the charter concept. As happened a few years back with welfare reform, just about everyone now claims to favor the basic notion while continuing to quarrel over the details of policy and program.

As we know, those details matter plenty. Get them wrong and you wind up with no real reform. Still, the fact that the debate has shifted from debates over lofty principle to negotiations over wonkish program parameters suggests that an important corner has been turned. The "era of big government" may be nearing its end in education, too. Some of the private sector's successful innovations—slimming middle management, turning each unit into a "profit center," decentralizing management decisions while demanding bottom-line accountability, expanding consumer options, redesigning products when customers demand change—are creeping into the public sector, even into the well-fortified precincts of primary and secondary schooling.

That movement is slow, yes, but perceptible, and it is hard to imagine it being reversed. What is more, the policy frontier keeps getting pushed back. The prospect of vouchers has, to many legislators, made charter schools seem far more palatable. The spread of public-school choice plans has caused the private-and-parochial variety to look to some like a difference in degree, not in kind. The widening of home schooling has recast the meaning of "school" itself, further blurred by the appearance in several places of "virtual" charter schools that serve home-taught students and their parents via electronic links, distance learning, and computers, with the youngsters themselves seldom or never turning up in person at the charter school in which they are registered (and which the state is paying for).

These virtual schools are not even the new paradigm's outer limit—a place that may begin to be approached by Kimberly Hahn and Mary Hasson in *Catholic Education*, their handbook for Catholic home-schoolers. This deeply religious tome suggests that even some parochial schools (and teachers) no longer do an adequate job of transmitting the Faith and that parents may therefore have to shoulder this burden directly.

Their emphasis on religion usefully reminds us that academic achievement is not the whole education story, nor are superior test scores the only hallmark of a school that parents may choose for their daughters and sons. Today in many communities—especially inner cities—a caring parent would have ample reasons to select a private or charter or privately managed school (or to teach his children at home) even if there were no evidence of better academic performance. Safety, character development, moral formation, discipline, protection from drugs and too-early sex and anti-intellectual peer pressures—these are at least as important to most parents as verbal and math achievement. They should be as important to educators and policymakers, too. The best news about American education today is the evidence that this is beginning to happen. FT

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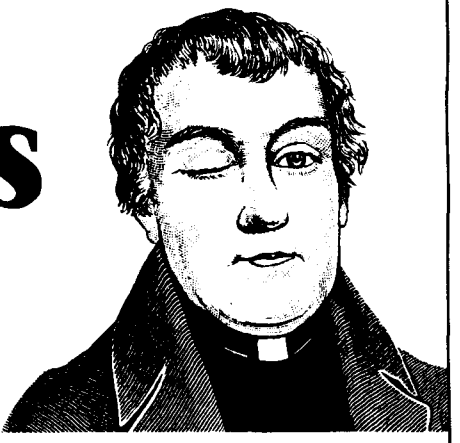
Treacherous Catholics?



The Vatican thunders against abortion, illicit sex, assisted suicide, dissenting theologians, and more. But in all too many parishes we don't hear much, if anything, about the ongoing slaughter of preborn babies, or the Church's teachings on homosexuality, pre-marital sex, pornography, etc. Papal authority and Hell are taboo subjects. Where's the beef? We just get marshmallows — and platitudes and pop psychology.

Even if these parishes and their priests look Catholic, we may wonder if they're just pretending to be Catholic. Some clerics, we now know, have been pretending to be celibate. Broken vows. Violated trust. Abuse of position. Flagrant sin. A field day for those, especially in the media, who hate the Church. Suspicion cast upon our good, hard-working priests. It's all so *very sad*.

Nobody's perfect. But we expect more of priests than we do of others. The priesthood isn't just another occupation; it's a sacred calling. Priests are charged with the cure, not the ruin, of souls.

Those who make excuses for wayward priests, bishops, and Religious are logically required to excuse all the Jim Bakkers and Jimmy Swaggarts too. This would be to make a farce of Christianity.

Sex scandals in the Catholic Church were few and far between before the sex revolution of the 60s and before Vatican II got misinterpreted to mean "anything goes." So a married priesthood is no cure-all. Indeed, many of the recent offenders aren't attracted to the opposite sex, and remember that Bakker and Swaggart were married men when they fell. Mandatory celibacy isn't the problem.

But we *have* a problem, and it's profound. Broadly speaking, the real problem is that in certain sectors of Catholicism there's been a failure of faith in the teaching authority Christ conferred upon His Church, and consequently a tragic capitulation to a decadent culture. If the full Catholic Faith isn't being preached from the pulpit, we shouldn't be too shocked if it isn't being observed in the rectory either.

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Books In Review

Who Are You?

THE CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS AND THE REMAKING OF WORLD ORDER. By SAMUEL P. HUNTINGTON. *Simon & Schuster. 367 pp. $26.*

***Reviewed by* A. J. Bacevich**

WIDELY HERALDED prognostications to the contrary notwithstanding, history has not ended. Rather, it continues to advance, implacable and perverse as ever. Indeed, according to this latest work by the distinguished political scientist Samuel P. Huntington, history may well be entering a particularly momentous and dangerous phase: momentous, because the advent of culture as the focal point of international politics is giving rise to antagonisms likely to dwarf the controversies of the past; dangerous, because illusions suffusing the present-day West may well portend disaster for "our side" in the impending global Kulturkampf.

A. J. BACEVICH *is Executive Director of the Foreign Policy Institute at the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies in Washington, D.C.*

The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order is a work touched by genius. Huntington has written a brilliant, riveting, and utterly original book, masterful in presentation and brimming with insight, its disturbing conclusions corroborated by an impressive array of data and well-chosen quotations. How Huntington makes his case is no less impressive than the argument itself. The author's style is precise, pithy, plainspoken, and coolly analytical. He eschews jargon. Crisp, declarative sentences array themselves in tightly organized paragraphs. Aphorisms abound. The result is vivid yet nuanced, elegant yet accessible.

It is also enormously provocative. To readers baffled by developments following in the wake of the abruptly terminated Cold War, *The Clash of Civilizations* offers a radically different prism through which to view world politics. As such, the policy implications of the book loom large. For this reason, Professor Huntington's book may also be the most significant—and potentially mischievous—volume to appear in recent memory.

The point of departure for Huntington's analysis is his distaste for Western smugness, the presumption —pervasive in the United States—

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that the collapse of communism points inevitably toward the worldwide embrace of democratic capitalism and universal deference to Western values. Such expectations, according to Huntington, are both fatuous and pernicious. He sets out to demolish them.

In reply to the global optimists basking in the triumph of the West and glorying in the benefits sure to accrue from the spread of market economies, free trade, and human rights, Huntington offers a different picture: the onset of an era in which conflict will be deep-seated and endemic and in which the West will find itself competing at severe disadvantage. The adversaries in this great struggle will be blocs of nations—"civilizations," in Huntington's construct—that will define their identity and determine their interests and loyalties primarily in cultural terms. "Peoples and countries with similar cultures are coming together," Huntington writes. "Peoples and countries with different cultures are coming apart." In essence, culture is eclipsing both nationalism and ideology as the nexus of politics. During the Cold War, he suggests, the fundamental question was, "Which side are you on?" Now the question has become, "Who are you?"

For Huntington, the answer to that question lies, first and foremost, in religion. "In the modern world," he writes, "religion is a central, perhaps the central, force that motivates and mobilizes people." As a result, any civilization bears the ineradicable imprint of the religious tradition that predominates among its peoples—in the West, for instance, Christianity. A clash between civilizations is thus a struggle not between princes and plenipotentiaries but between religions. The stakes are fundamental. The conflict itself is likely to prove intractable.

Redrawing the geographical map along cultural lines, Huntington identifies eight distinctive civilizations: Islamic, Sinic (centered on the "core state" of China), Western (with the United States as its core), Orthodox (with Russia as its core), Japanese, Hindu, Latin American, and (somewhat tentatively) African. Geopolitically, the latter two count for little. Each of the others is likely to have an important role in the forthcoming struggle, but Islam, the West, and China constitute a tier apart, with the "most dangerous clashes of the future . . . likely to arise from the interaction of Western arrogance, Islamic intolerance, and Sinic assertiveness." Or to portray the contending forces more starkly still: "The dominant division is between the West and the rest."

Indeed, it is the West's penchant for meddling, in Huntington's view, that will make the age of civiliza-

the road to the future
runs through the past.

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tions so perilous. Western insistence that its own values provide the model to which other civilizations must adhere virtually guarantees discord. "What is universalism to the West," he notes, "is imperialism to the rest."

Making this intrusiveness more problematic still is the growing mismatch between the West's aspirations and its capacity to enforce them. "The West won the world," Huntington observes, "not by the superiority of its ideas or values or religion . . . but rather by its superiority in applying organized violence." Now, according to Huntington, the power of the West relative to that of other civilizations has begun to ebb, most notably in comparison to Islam and China. In the Islamic world, massive population growth breeds restlessness and resentment—and produces cohorts of easily mobilized fighters eager to repay the West for slights real and imagined. In China proper and throughout the Sinic world, skyrocketing economic growth translates into military potential that threatens the long-standing dominance of Western arms. The United States and the traditional European powers meanwhile remain willfully oblivious to "the discordance between the West's—particularly America's—efforts to promote a universal Western culture and its declining ability to do so."

Huntington is properly wary of the new economic giant that he labels "Greater China and its Co-Prosperity Sphere." In Huntington's view, China's emergence as East Asian hegemon is all but inevitable. For the West, the better part of wisdom is to accommodate itself, however reluctantly, to that prospect.

WHEN IT COMES TO Islam, however, Huntington appears less sanguine. The prospects for accommodation are not promising. "The twentieth-century conflict between liberal democracy and Marxist-Leninism," he observes at one point, "is only a fleeting and superficial historical phenomenon compared to the continuing and deeply conflictual relation between Islam and Christianity." As civilizations, Islam and the West—the one with its jihads, the other given to crusades—seem peculiarly well-suited to be at each other's throat.

Huntington does not attribute the West's recent difficulties with Islam to the influence of a handful of fanatics. "The underlying problem for the West is not Islamic fundamentalism. It is Islam, a different civilization whose people are convinced of the superiority of their culture and are obsessed with the inferiority of their power." Given this combination of qualities, Islam finds it difficult to live in harmony with its neighbors. In the famous *Foreign*

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Affairs article ("The Clash of Civilizations?" Summer 1993) that was the genesis of this book, Huntington stated categorically that "Islam has bloody borders." And he bluntly refuses to soften that assertion now. In short, Huntington's dread of Islam comes at times precariously close to unbridled antipathy.

All of this, in Huntington's estimation, does not point inevitably to a cataclysmic intercivilizational spasm of self-destruction—although such an outcome is within the realm of possibility. It does, however, point to a new era of competition, friction, and contentiousness. At times, the competition will manifest itself in armed conflict. When actual fighting does break out, it will produce bitter, protracted, off-again-on-again violence that will smolder intermittently along the boundaries adjoining rival civilizations. In this regard, Huntington points to Bosnia as the grim prototype for "fault line" wars to come.

The Clash of Civilizations is prescriptive as well as descriptive. Huntington's purpose is not to foretell an inevitable blow-up but to posit civilizations as the essential building blocs of a new approach to strategy. "The world will be ordered on the basis of civilizations," he asserts, "or not at all." To achieve a modicum of stability, a world ordered on the basis of competing civilizations will be a world that respects spheres of influence. For Huntington—rejecting the assertions of American statesmen from Woodrow Wilson through Bill Clinton—there is not One World but several. Culturally, there is no single Family of Man, but many families and they do not necessarily get along. All of the giddy talk about globalization, particularly evident since the end of the Cold War, is nonsense: "In the emerging order, global power is obsolete, global community a distant dream."

For the United States, impelled to be "at least a nanny if not a bully in international affairs," accepting a world divided into spheres of influence will not come easy. To endorse such an arrangement is to curb long-held missionary instincts. In Huntington's estimation, however, only by foregoing its pretensions as vanguard of universalism can the United States avoid catastrophe. Accordingly, the prudent course for America is "not to attempt to stop the shift in power but to learn to navigate the shallows, endure the miseries, moderate its ventures, and safeguard its culture."

The last element is a matter of some urgency. Indeed, Huntington's characterization of present-day American culture bears more than passing resemblance to the decadent and corrupt Great Satan that is the favorite target of fundamentalist mullahs. Crime, violence, drug abuse, illegitimacy, failing schools,

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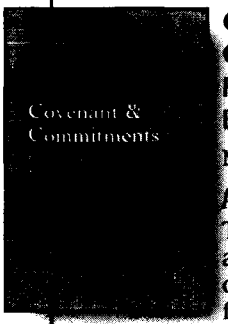

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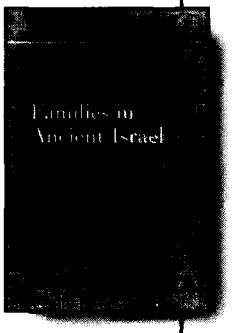

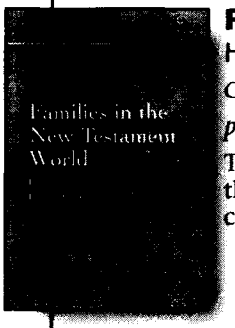

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the erosion of the family, a weakened work ethic, and "a cult of personal indulgence" all point to a moral decline that approaches "cultural suicide." For the West in general and the United States in particular the importance of "stopping and reversing the internal processes of decay" is paramount.

Huntington has no doubts about the chief impediment to reversing this process of decay: it is multiculturalism. A small, vocal, but influential minority, multiculturalists deny that the United States is part of Western civilization or that Americans possess a common culture. Propagating the notion that American society consists of various indigestible racial, ethnic, and other subgroups, multiculturalists effectively deny even the possibility of revitalizing a unified culture.

For Huntington, preserving the United States "means rejecting the divisive siren calls of multiculturalism." Indeed, he endorses the view of James Kurth that "the real clash" facing the United States is not the prospect of confrontation with China or Islam. The real clash occurs within, "between the multiculturalists and the defenders of Western civilization and the American Creed."

Viewed in this context, the overriding imperative for American leaders is to reaffirm the identity of the United States as an indelibly Western nation. For the U.S. and its cultural partners, the essential task is "not to attempt to reshape other civilizations in the image of the West, . . . but to preserve, protect, and renew the unique qualities of Western civilization." Ultimately, Huntington concludes, "in the clash of civilizations, Europe and America will hang together or hang separately."

HOW IS ONE to evaluate this tour de force? One is reminded of the story of the prep-school headmaster grading the work of young C. Douglas Dillon. "A+," recorded the headmaster. "Can do better."

The acknowledged dean of American political scientists, Samuel P. Huntington hardly qualifies as a precocious youngster. Yet *The Clash of Civilizations* unquestionably rates an A+—and it could be better.

The qualities that make the book compelling also compromise its utility. Huntington's world of vying cultures is a remarkably tidy world. Each civilization occupies a discernible perimeter. (One map included in the text carefully traces the "Eastern Boundary of Western Civilization" all the way from the Baltic to the Adriatic.) Each adheres to an assigned area like a tectonic plate floating on the earth's surface. Huntington's knack for vivid phrasemaking—core states, kin countries, fault lines, cleavages, bandwagoning—reinforces this visual aspect, making his basic argument easy to grasp and almost impossible to forget.

Yet this effort to depict the world in simple terms using the broadest possible categories collides with our experience of everyday life. No doubt there is some cultural denominator linking the African-American cop from Chicago and the elderly wife of a dairy farmer in Provence—and setting them apart from a young business executive on the make in Shenzhen. But to impute political significance to such bonds and distinctions is to credit the wispiest notions of kinship.

At the same time, the imagery of clashing civilizations does possess real and potentially explosive emotional resonance. From his scholarly perch at Harvard, Professor Huntington gives credence to apprehensions that the less erudite and articulate have until now quietly nursed. He examines the tendency of plain folk to identify with "their own kind" and to view with suspicion those from alien tribes. In their instinctive capacity to distinguish friend from foe, he finds much to commend. After all, "we know who

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we are only when we know who we are not and often only when we know whom we are up against." Thus does Huntington legitimize those anxieties—and unwittingly encourage them. His analysis connects with the dark side of human nature that is too willing to interpret difference as inferiority or evidence of malign intent. He puts the stamp of respectability on fears all too easily twisted into bigotry. To the extent that it finds a wide audience and persuades its readers, *The Clash of Civilizations* could inadvertently serve the cause of intolerance, racism, and xenophobia.

The role of religion is a problem in Huntington's paradigm. As noted, in sorting the world along civilizational lines, he assigns religion a preeminemt place. More than any other factor, according to Huntington, religious affiliation signifies "who we are" and "who we are not." It identifies kin and marks prospective rivals. Yet implicit in Huntington's argument is the notion that religion in its own right is without standing. Religion illuminates politics, but should play no independent role in politics. (It is a safe bet that when Huntington calls for the revival of Western civilization he is not advocating restoration of One Holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church exercising authority over secular affairs.) For Huntington, religion—particularly religion in the West—is an anachronism, something that was itself once alive and powerful but that now survives largely as artifact or memento. Yet in thus consigning religion to role of cultural ID card, Huntington misconstrues its significance, both politically and otherwise.

For starters, although the West may be Christian, Christianity is not confined to the West. It is, in Huntington's own terms, an intercivilizational phenomenon. Nor is Christianity a force that spent itself long ago imparting its gifts to civilization and that now survives as little more than a passive cultural reference. The Christian Church is vast, varied, and itself continually evolving, always, one hopes, with an eye fixed on Truth. Thus, Christianity does not subordinate itself to civilization. Rather, it engages in an ongoing dialogue with civilization (not the West alone) in which each respondent continually influences the other. This is manifestly true with regard to Christianity in the United States—and is no doubt true with regard to other religious traditions in the West. For if Christianity does not confine itself to the West, neither does religiosity in the West confine itself to Christianity.

In short, while Huntington is right to see religion as a factor in the coming era of world politics, the role of religion will go well beyond serving as a touchstone for culture. Religion is more than culture. It transcends civilizations. In the end, to listen to the believers among us, it will transcend history itself.

Mere Joy

Life As We Know It: A Father, a Family, and an Exceptional Child. By Michael Bérubé. *Pantheon. 284 pp. $24.*

***Reviewed by* Molly Finn**

Michael Bérubé, a professor of American and African-American literature at the University of Illinois and, since 1991, the father of a son with Down syndrome, has produced a thick, pungent, and irritating brew that mixes a tender account of his son's first four years of life with diatribes against imagined "conservative" enemies, tiresome essays on some of the author's favorite subjects, and instruction in any number of his politically correct ideas.

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Molly Finn *is a writer living in New York City.*

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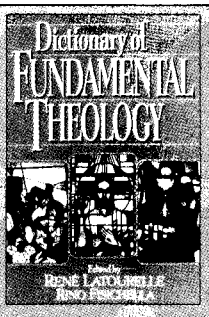

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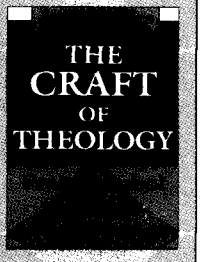

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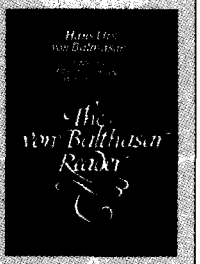

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family on vacation we are introduced to "my little Jamie," age three. We see father and son spending an afternoon in an amusement park, having dinner in a restaurant followed by a long play session in a roomful of empty tables in which Jamie, pretending to be a waiter, takes orders from imaginary diners, fetches the food from an imaginary kitchen, and delivers it to the tables. Father and son talk, sing, endlessly watch an amusement park train ride, counting the cars but never getting on. The mood is peaceful, the father warmly focused on his child's world.

Below the surface, however, Bérubé is always wondering about Jamie, asking questions, making comparisons. By the end of his ten-page introduction we have had a reference to Wittgenstein, a thumbnail analysis of Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*, a quotation from Shakespeare, and a sweeping outline of the large social, political, and moral questions people like Jamie lead us to consider. Bérubé concludes his introduction wondering whether humans have obligations to each other and what these obligations might be. And yet, though he is a man sufficiently educated to identify Jesus' injunction "whatsoever you do to the least of my brothers . . ." as the moral index of *The Sound and the Fury*, he seems at last unable to take instruction from it.

James was born with Down syndrome, a genetic disorder that occurs in the earliest stage of fetal development, almost at the moment of conception, giving the child forty-seven instead of the normal forty-six chromosomes in every DNA molecule and carrying with it a number of distinctive characteristics. James also had a fetal opening in his heart that hadn't closed properly, a floppy larynx, an excess of red blood cells, abnormally tight neck muscles, three malformed vertebrae, curvature of the spine, low muscle tone, and severe feeding problems.

Bérubé chronicles the process of facing and dealing with this ordeal without self-pity or complaint. The account of his and his wife's acceptance of this completely unexpected and life-changing event is at once matter-of-fact, loving, and understanding. The years of intelligent, imaginative, dedicated, and loving care they have given this child are a model and a shining example to the world. Such a child could have been left to starve to death under the eyes of the hospital staff. (A 1975 poll revealed that 77 percent of American pediatric surgeons favored withholding food and medical treatment from infants with Down syndrome and leaving them to die.) Instead he is a thriving little boy who loves music, books, going to school, who can not only talk but also sign, who loves and is loved by his mother, his father, his brother, and lots of other people.

WHAT WE NOW know as Down syndrome was identified and named by British physician J. Langdon Down in 1866. Bérubé holds in scorn those who used the old term of "mongolism" (for the typically almond-shaped eyes), and seems to believe that the change in name marks a change in the condition. Is there a connection, he asks, between the names used to identify people with Down syndrome and the social policies by which they "are understood and misunderstood? You bet your life there is."

I think not. The stigma lies in the perception that what is wrong with the person named, what is different about him, is degrading. This perception is transferred to the name.

When Down syndrome was first identified, the life expectancy for such a child was ten years. With the advent of antibiotics this was doubled, and though people with Down's remain medically more vulnerable than the general population, their life expectancy has continued to increase until it is now fifty-five, with many living much longer. Previously thought to have a uniformly low IQ of around 40, these people are now known to have a wide range of social and intellectual abilities; many of them learn to read and write and can hold down jobs with greater or lesser amounts of special help required. Many can live

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independently or semi-independently. Like everyone else, people with Down's have distinctive personalities, strengths, and needs. They are often perceived to bring warmth, generosity, and friendliness to those whose lives touch theirs.

They are also in the process of being eliminated from the human community by the use of amniocentesis and other prenatal tests to diagnose them in utero, followed by the only "treatment" that exists: abortion.

"The danger for children like Jamie does not lie in women's freedom to choose abortion," claims Bérubé, "nor does it lie in prenatal testing." "The danger lies in the creation of a society that combines eugenics with enforced fiscal austerity." Unfortunately, it is precisely the society's embracing of prenatal testing and abortion as ways of improving the human community that leads to the support of eugenics and the increasing application of cost-benefit analysis to recommendations of prenatal testing followed by abortion of Down syndrome fetuses.

People in high places are increasingly willing to support abortion of Down's fetuses as public policy: "Abortion," said Arkansas state health director Joycelyn Elders in testimony before Congress in 1990, "has had an important, and positive, public-health effect . . . the number of Down syndrome infants in Washington state in 1976 was 64 percent lower than it would have been without legal abortion." Speaking of the "enormous cost-saving potential of amniocentesis," Columbia Business School researcher Nachum Sicherman enumerates the costs and concludes: "There is nothing more beneficial than amniocentesis, if it is given under the assumption that if Down syndrome is discovered, there is an abortion following. It's a great cost saving."

There is another view. Dominic Lawson, editor of the London *Spectator* and the father of a Down syndrome child, writes of the National Health Service policy of providing a free abortion "if their tests show that the mother is expecting a Down's baby; an abortion even well after the normal legal limit of twenty-four weeks into the pregnancy 'if there is a substantial risk that if the child were born it would suffer from such physical or mental abnormalities as to be seriously handicapped.' This is nothing less than the annihilation of viable, sentient fetuses. In the People's Republic of China, the authorities wait until such children are born naturally, before starving them to death. In Hitler's Germany, even before the final solution to the Jewish 'problem,' the Nazis were exterminating wholesale the mentally retarded. In this country the weeding-out process is done before birth, and only with the parents' consent. I do not think, however, that this constitutes a triumph for democracy."

Bérubé says, "It's true that many parents who test the fetus for Down syndrome will abort if the test is positive . . . but there's no reason to conclude that testing in itself constitutes a threat to the existence of people with Down syndrome." So determined is Bérubé not to discourage the use of prenatal tests that it is only twenty-two pages later (and in parentheses) that he reveals what public records clearly show: "Only one couple in ten will choose to have a child with Down's if the amniocentesis is positive." There are no figures available on precisely how the amnio-abortion route has affected the Down's population, but there is unanimous agreement that there has been a dramatic decrease in the number of Down's babies born here as well as in other countries.

Bérubé raises many good points but frequently undermines them by surrounding them with vitriolic rhetoric. He quotes an article by the mother of a Down's child who believes that prenatal testing is but a prelude to abortion—"Over the past two decades, while one branch of the medical sciences has sought with extraordinary success to eradicate the worst effects of retardation in Down syndrome people, another branch has sought simply to eradicate people with Down syndrome"—and it

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propels him into a frenzied attack, unable to "read an essay like hers without feeling a disabling anger and pain that prevent me from resting on the common ground we're supposed to share."

Bérubé's extreme reaction to those who disagree with him calls into question much of the sincerity and disinterestedness of his book. The enemy is identified, attacked, blamed, and held up to scorn, albeit frequently out of ignorance or simple-minded political correctness, and it always turns out to be a "free-market ideologue," or "self-appointed moralists who talk endlessly about 'family values' while kicking the crutches out from under Tiny Tim," or those who believe that "humans have an innate 'right to life'—but only until they're born."

Bérubé certainly sees himself as a full participant in his and his wife's decision not to undergo amniocentesis. In fact, he seems to display a marked disjunction between his own firsthand experience and the set of beliefs he so passionately defends throughout the book. When he says that "Jamie the four-year-old child is not the same creature he was when he was a fetus in the third or fourth month of development, and we do not project onto the fetus our feelings for the child," he is simply disingenuous. It is only when parents are seeking an excuse for abortion that they can look on their fetus as not human.

Bérubé is an academic to the core. As Jamie learns to talk, St. Augustine is quoted and repudiated by Wittgenstein; the difference between Platonic and anti-Platonic theories of language is examined along with pre-Socratic theories of identity and perception. Descartes' doubts and Steven Pinker's explanation of the scandal of induction are not neglected, and W. V. O. Quine and Noam Chomsky are invoked. An analysis of the thought of Michel Foucault clogs the account of Bérubé's training as a Special Sitter in a class held at his local Developmental Services Center. (The existence of this potentially helpful service surprisingly provokes Bérubé's spleen: "the Special Sitter classes were wonderfully effective, not only because they taught me CPR . . . but also because they introduced me to the world of Special Services, the world that twentieth-century capitalist democracies created to tend to the needs of people who would otherwise be ill served either by capitalism or democracy." It is irresistible to note that so far he has availed himself of the Special Sitter service only once, when he and his wife spent three days at an MLA convention.)

ONCE IN A WHILE the author lets his guard down and admits that firsthand experience may be more instructive than an abstract belief system: "If you had told me in August 1991—or, for that matter, after an amniocentesis in April 1991—that I'd have to feed my infant by dipping a small plastic tube in K-Y jelly and slipping it into his nose and down his pharynx into his teeny tummy, I'd have told you that I wasn't capable of caring for such a child. But by mid-October, I felt as if I had grown new limbs and new areas of the brain to direct them. Weirdest of all, I was able to accept nasal feedings as part of a routine, using nothing more than the emotional apparatus I was born with." There's something very seductive, he later writes, "about the thought that Down syndrome wouldn't have been so prevalent in humans for so long without good reason. Indeed, there are days when, despite everything I know and profess, I catch myself believing that people with Down syndrome are here for a specific purpose—perhaps to teach us patience, or humility, or compassion, or mere joy."

After such passages, I found it hard to accept the last words of the book: "I have no sweeter dream than to imagine—aesthetically and ethi-

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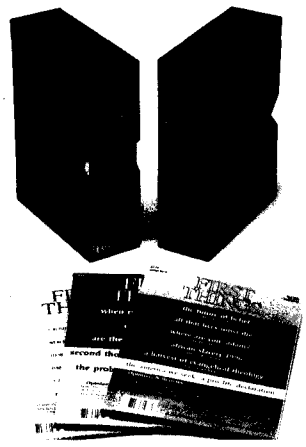

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cally and parentally—that Jamie will someday be his own advocate, his own author, his own best representative." Is this really Bérubé's sweetest dream for his son? Doesn't he dream that Jamie might have the joy and satisfaction that comes from having a secure place in the world, even if he needs help to maintain it; that he will come to know what his abilities are, and how to make the most of them? What about loving other people and being loved by them? What about the self-respect that grows out of knowing how to do a job and performing it faithfully and competently? For me a sweeter dream would be that as Jamie grows up he will remain squarely in the middle of the human community, a vibrant person and a reminder that in his being and in the deeds of his life he can, in his father's words, teach us patience, or humility, or compassion, or mere joy.

Strained Mercy

Seduced By Death: Doctors, Patients, and the Dutch Cure. By Herbert Hendin. *Norton. 256 pp. $27.50.*

Reviewed by **Eric Chevlen**

Somewhere there may be a swimming coach who has never been in the water, but it is difficult to imagine that he is a very good one. Similarly, judges, legislators, and voters are making literally life-and-death decisions concerning legalized physician-assisted suicide (PAS) and euthanasia, this despite the fact that most of them have never even spoken with a suicidal person. Yet there is a vast corpus of knowledge concerning suicide and the depression that almost invariably precedes it. There are psychiatrists who specialize in management of the suicidal patient. Herbert Hendin, head of the American Suicide Foundation and Professor of Psychiatry at New York Medical College, is one of these specialists, and he wields his considerable expertise in this important book.

Hendin reports on euthanasia and PAS not merely in theory, but as it is actually practiced in the Netherlands, and he reports on extensive interviews he conducted with its chief defenders there. One hardly knows which is more chilling, the widespread flouting of the scant and effectively toothless legal regulation of euthanasia in Holland, or the sangfroid with which it is defended by the Dutch practitioners.

For example, Hendin presents the case of "Netty Boomsma," a physi-

Eric Chevlen, M.D., *is a diplomate of the American Boards of Internal Medicine, Medical Oncology, Hematology, and Pain Medicine. He is Director of Palliative Care at St. Elizabeth Health Center, Youngstown, Ohio.*

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cally healthy fifty-year-old woman who lost her sons (one to suicide and one to cancer) and was shortly afterward divorced by her husband. She contacted the Dutch Voluntary Euthanasia Society, which referred her to Dr. Boudewijn Chabot, a psychiatrist who had previously indicated his interest in receiving such referrals. Chabot was to know her only a little more than a month before he assisted in her suicide. Netty was never personally evaluated by any other psychiatrist, although several consultants urged Chabot to proceed, basing their endorsement on nothing more than Chabot's own written summary of Netty's case. After Netty's death, the local prosecutor, who personally agreed with Chabot's action, made a tepid case against him. The Dutch court exonerated Chabot, and the medical authorities did nothing more than reprimand him for some procedural peccadilloes.

At least Netty, emotionally impaired as she was, consented to participate in this physician-assisted suicide—or should I call it a patient-assisted homicide? Yet, as Hendin reports, a Dutch government commission found that in about half of the 49,000 cases in which there was a medical decision at the end of life, the doctor chose a "treatment" whose primary or secondary purpose was to shorten the life of the patient—despite the fact that the patient had not been consulted on the matter. The Dutch delicately refer to this as "termination of the patient without explicit request." Underlying this euphemism is the unchallenged assumption that the doctor knows best. Indeed, as Hendin demonstrates, the regulations placed on PAS and euthanasia in Holland are not designed to protect patients, but rather to exculpate the doctors who help or make them die.

HENDIN EXPLAINS that the abuses we see in Holland would pale in comparison to abuses in the United States were PAS or euthanasia legalized here. Exacerbating our prospects are the lack of the extensive family doctor system seen in Holland, the unequal access to health care, and the disadvantaged position of the disabled, racial minorities, and elderly.

When society gives the power of ending life to physicians, they will exercise it when they conclude that life is of no value. The physician becomes the final arbiter of life's worth. Ironically, and quite contrary to their stated goal, by turning the physician into executioner the euthanasiasts effectively increase the medicalization of death and diminish patient autonomy.

Proper palliative care, by contrast, starts with the recognition of the value of each individual life, and seeks to maximize physical, emotional, and spiritual comfort. There can be no effective safeguards on legalized euthanasia and PAS when its practitioners share the contempt with which the suicidal dying and disabled view their lives. These euthanasiasts are themselves impaired, of course, unable to recognize the depression or terror that lies behind the patient's request for expedited death. The second opinions the euthanasia doctors are obliged to elicit and the psychological consultations they are required to seek are worthless, because the euthanist only chooses consultants who share his fundamental disdain for what in less politically correct times were called useless eaters.

Hendin is at his best when he describes the multifaceted reality of the individuals who are at the center of this fatal drama. A sick person who seeks suicide is fundamentally no different from a physically healthy one who does. The vast majority of such people are clinically depressed, although all too often their doctors fail to recognize it. (Fifty percent of suicides consult a

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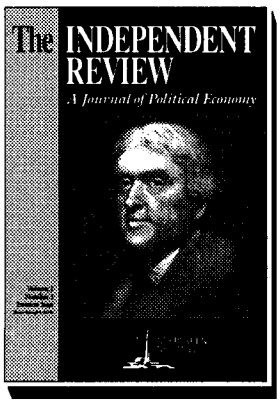

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doctor within a month before their death.) Many of those who seek assisted suicide are in a state of terror. They are mortally fearful of debility, dependence, or even death. Some are so afraid of death that they would rather die than live in such fear. Assisting in such suicide does not promote patient autonomy and dignity. Rather it reduces the patient to a victim of his fear and despair, and it guarantees that he will not work through his fear and find value in his life.

Hendin also rightfully emphasizes the enabling roles of the physician, family, and society in this grim scenario. In Holland it is common for the doctor to be the first to suggest euthanasia to his patient. Given the disparity of power in a doctor-patient relationship, a doctor's willingness to assist in a patient's suicide is a strong signal that the doctor feels that it is the right thing to do. A sick patient often lacks the strength to resist such a culturally powerful figure.

In these matters, families cannot be neutral. Even if they say, "It's up to you, Mom," when asked their opinion about a proposed suicide, their reply is correctly heard as indifference about the life in question. In a society where euthanasia is widely practiced, as in Holland now, the terminally ill and disabled have learned that the public at large finds no significant value in their lives. Far from dying in dignity, these tragic souls must live their final days as objects of strained mercy at best, or simple contempt at worst. At a time when his own morale is at its lowest, when the patient is most in need of encouragement and validation, he finds himself surrounded by figures of power and authority who feel that he really ought to just hurry up and die.

Unlike the Dutch euthanasiasts, Hendin has not been seduced by death. He has looked unblinkingly at the Dutch experience with physician-mediated death, and found not loving engagement, but institutionalized abandonment.

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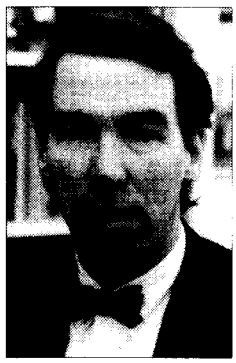

We generally suppose that it is our right to freedom which allows us to make the choices that shape our lives. Freedom is not a right that makes moral judgments—it lets us do what we want. John Garvey argues that we should understand freedom as a right to act, not a right to choose; furthermore, we should view freedom as a right to engage in actions that are good and valuable. This may seem obvious, but it inverts a central principle of liberalism—the idea that the right is prior to the good. The author's keen insights into important rights issues, communicated with a variety of both real and hypothetical cases, will be of interest to all who care about the meaning of freedoms.

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Rethinking Ritual

LOOKING AT THE LITURGY: A CRITICAL VIEW OF ITS CONTEMPORARY FORM. By AIDAN NICHOLS. *Ignatius. 129 pp. $11.95.*

Reviewed by **Jeremy Driscoll**

SOMETHING IS TERRIBLY wrong with the Roman Catholic liturgy, and more and more people seem to know it. Unfortunately, what they don't seem to know is where precisely the problem lies and what precisely needs to be done about it. It is on this sea of uncertainty that Aidan Nichols' new book, *Looking at the Liturgy*, comes as a real help, promising at least to give us some bearings for navigating amidst the questions and concerns that beset today's liturgy.

The book is quite short—but that is, in fact, one of its virtues, for it digests and makes available to nonspecialists a number of the more technical studies that explain the reasons for our liturgical problems. After three chapters treating the history of the modern liturgical movement, the sociological influence on liturgical reform, and the critiques of contemporary cultural and artistic critics, Nichols turns in his fourth chapter to practical suggestions.

THE IDEAS THAT LED to the ritual reforms of the Second Vatican Council—and are still driving further reform—did not spring brand-new from the deliberations of the Council. They have historical pedigrees, often quite long, and some of those pedigrees ought to give us pause. Nichols presents some of the little-known work of Waldemar Trapp in *Vorgeschichte und Ursprung der liturgischen Bewegung* (1940), claiming, "Trapp's study makes it abundantly clear that the origins of the liturgical movement lie in the eighteenth-century Enlightenment."

Although Nichols does not automatically dismiss the liturgical movement for its Enlightenment roots, he does suggest that knowledge of these roots helps the reader understand why the reformed liturgy moved in certain directions, manifesting, at its worst, "a utilitarian or pragmatist philosophical infrastructure for which happiness or usefulness is the key to truth; anthropocentrism; a predominance of ethical values over strictly religious ones; a downplaying of the notion of special revelation in favor wherever possible of religion within the limits of reason; and in aesthetics an ideal of noble simplicity." The ritual reforms following Vatican II were conducted largely under the influence of these Enlightenment notions, and the reforms continue to advance accordingly as styles in music, vernacular languages, architecture, and all the other churchly arts are justified and promoted according to Enlightenment ideals.

MORE IMPLAUSIBLY, Nichols suggests that the liturgical reform movement might have relied profitably on nineteenth-century Romanticism (where the idea was not so much reform of actual rituals as deepening sensitivity to their meaning and beauty), though Romanticism is a tradition with its own serious problems. But in any case, the reforms happened as they did happen, and now, thirty years after Vatican II, we are left wondering what we ought to do. No one, not even the surviving reformers, remains as confident as in the heady days immediately after the Council. In his second and third chapters Nichols presents the analyses of anthropologists, sociologists, and cultural critics who, though they do not speak with a theological competence, ask whether there was not a failure in human prudence in so rapid and academic a dismantling of ancient rites sunk deep in the consciousness of generations of believers. Rites do change, of course, but anthropologists tell us that such change usually occurs organically and almost imperceptibly.

The sociological problem, as Nichols describes it, seems finally to be that rapid reform of the Roman Catholic liturgy was made under the influence of a set of very large, very abstract philosophical ideas about how people ought to interact with God and other people—despite the fact that sociologists now uniformly claim that such large ideas are "wholly impotent when considered

JEREMY DRISCOLL, O.S.B, *is a Benedictine monk and priest at Mount Angel Abbey in St. Benedict, Oregon. He teaches theology at Mount Angel Seminary and at the Pontifical Athenaeum Sant' Anselmo in Rome.*

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as bases on which to found the life of groups or even individuals." (It is worth observing, however, that sociologists were making somewhat different noises back in the early 1960s when most of the reforms were undertaken.) We have, Nichols observes, rites and architecture and music and language and a disposition of the altar, all conceived according to the Enlightenment ideal of "noble simplicity," when "to the sociologist, it is by no means self-evident that brief, clear rites have greater transformative potential than complex, abundant, lavish, rich, long rites, furnished with elaborate ceremonial."

To some, Nichols' practical suggestions in his fourth chapter will seem radical; to others, not radical enough. Last November, in an article in *America*, Monsignor M. Francis Mannion identified five distinct positions on the liturgy, and Nichols falls squarely into the category Mannion calls "reforming the reform." He acknowledges the dangers of further rounds of reform in the same direction as the postconciliar one (better to stick with something half broken than allow those who broke it to finish the job), and he suggests that considerable gain can be had merely by promoting the prayerful, dignified, correct, and solemn celebration of the *Novus Ordo* that came out of Vatican II. A renewal of the arts and more graceful movement and gesture in the liturgy could also contribute much. Probably his most significant immediate suggestion is the recovery of the eastward position of both priest and people in the recitation of the Eucharistic Prayer. Perhaps nothing has made a larger contribution than the moved altar to congregations' concentrating more on themselves than on worship of the Father.

But Nichols also thinks, at last, that the Rite of Paul VI, which is almost universally used today, cannot really be fixed. It could be the basis for the development of new ritual traditions in cultures far removed from the world of Bible and Fathers, and could perhaps also serve as a rite for Catholic-minded separated Western Christians who wish to enter Catholic unity in some corporate way. And, of course, it could be used in communities that do not wish to recover the historical and spiritual patrimony of the Latin rite in a fuller form. Nichols feels, however, that there should be "provision by the Holy See of means for a future moderate revision of those earlier forms of the Latin rite," by which he has in mind a reform based on the Latin, Tridentine, and very traditional 1962 Missal.

I was quite young when the liturgy changed and so have lived all my adult life and all my priestly vocation under the reformed liturgy—a liturgy that has blessed me again and again, a liturgy that lives deep inside me. And yet, as I have grown older, I have come to see, in much of how we celebrate, serious problems that seem to derive directly from the rite's discontinuity with the spirit of liturgy from past centuries.

At the same time, however, I am only partially convinced by the author's suggestions for what amounts to a phasing out of the Rite of Paul VI, just as I am only partially convinced about a Mass celebrated with priest and congregation facing in the same direction. My cautions come from the thinking of the sociologists and anthropologists Nichols himself presents. What would they have to say about more sudden ritual change coming from the top? Nothing in Nichols' book allows for—as we used to say—the *sensus communis fidelium* to influence the *lex orandi, lex credendi.* Though the sense of the faithful shows us that something is wrong with our sacramental rites, it also shows that at least some of the reformed liturgy is accepted and even cherished by those who worship according to the new rites.

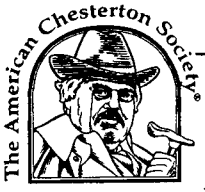
While discussing such things, it should not be forgotten that something deeper than rites, language, and style is at issue. The real reform is always spiritual; and although it can never be achieved without affecting rites, language, and style, it cannot be identified with them. Today and tomorrow we will celebrate the Mass according to the Rite of Paul VI, in most cases with priest facing the people at the altar. We can do so more prayerfully and with more dignity, and we can seek more worthy music and better translations of liturgical texts. We can even hope, while we do so, for a radical return to older liturgical rites. But first and foremost, we must continue to celebrate the Mass.

Binnacles and Garlic

Sympathetic Attractions: Magnetic Practices, Beliefs, and Symbolism in Eighteenth-Century England. By Patricia Fara. *Princeton University Press. 317 pp. $45.*

Reviewed by
Hugh Ormsby-Lennon

For an epigraph to *Sympathetic Attractions,* Patricia Fara might re-



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vealingly have chosen the haunting words with which L. P. Hartley begins *The Go-Between*: "The past is a foreign country. They do things differently there." Certainly Fara's fascinating peregrinations through magnetic practices, beliefs, and symbolism in eighteenth-century England capture the fact that our ancestors were a far-fetched and outlandish bunch, superstitious or quixotic as often as empirical or rational.

And since Britannia, in those days, ruled the waves, Fara often finds herself voyaging through strange seas around the globe. Readers who have sampled Dava Sobel's remarkable best-seller *Longitude* will find much to enjoy in *Sympathetic Attractions*, for Fara also explores, in more encyclopedic detail, how various pure and applied sciences quickened England and its growing empire during the eighteenth century. But where Sobel offered a fast-moving narrative enlivened by picturesque vignettes and by snippets of scientific lore, Fara's slower-moving, scholarly work wends its way through an intricate succession of intellectual, social, and spiritual landscapes. *Sympathetic Attractions* introduces us to the professional dynamics of natural science, the challenges of exploration, the stunts of charlatans, the literary riffs on magnetism, and the theological lucubrations on scientific metaphors for God's agency and love—together with arresting interactions among them all.

NOT SURPRISINGLY, perhaps, the moral of Fara's book is the inverse of the "moral" encapsulated in the subtitle of Sobel's: *The True Story of a Lone Genius who Solved the Greatest Scientific Problem of his Time.* For Sobel the story of magnetism is the story of the dogged autodidact John Harrison, a carpenter and village choirmaster from Yorkshire who designed the almost frictionless marine chronometers essential for calculating longitude. By contrast, Fara recreates a rough-and-tumble world that embraces salesmanship and crackpottery as well as genius and craftsmanship, a world that produced not only Harrison's successful solution (itself dependent upon skilled clockmakers) but also oddball "magnetical" proposals involving ethereal theories of electricity or even stabbed dogs. (When a "sympathetic powder" was applied to the offending knife at noon in London, the shipboard canine, his wound kept raw, would ululate on the other side of the world, thereby acting as a living timepiece.)

IF FARA INCLINES towards a hero (or anti-hero), it is Gowin Knight, whose story hinges upon self-promotion rather than lone genius. "The greatest Master of Practical Magnetics that has appear'd in any Age," according to Benjamin Franklin, Knight rose from a provincial background, excelled at Oxford (where library books actually moldered from lack of use), sparkled as a society physician in London, and ended his career as live-in principal librarian at the British Museum. In between gambling unsuccessfully on Cornish mining projects, hobnobbing (more remuneratively) with the nobility, and hustling his "Machine for Making Artificial Magnets," Knight achieved fame and fortune as an heroic inventor of the first scientific compass, "which is now used aboard all our vessels of war." Fara compellingly unfolds the big picture as well as displaying a sharp eye for quirky detail and memorable anecdote. At the British Museum, for example, the irascible Knight bricked up a staff toilet after he had become irritated by innumerable colleagues trudging past his window.

In introducing her large and colorful dramatis personae—one that encompasses admirals, explorers, instrument makers, astronomers royal, coleporteurs, Royal Society virtuosi, electrical bed salesmen, visionary poets, scatological engravers, rebarbative dons, mesmerists, and loopy parsons—Fara too often slops up the jargon favored by today's "cutting edge" sociologists of science. This alphabet gruel of "domains," "imbrications," "interactive shapings," "contests for cultural authority," ad nauseam, has lost whatever flavor it may once have had. "Examining compasses as conceptually unstable objects will enable us," Fara promises, "to explore

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the fluid boundaries between shifting communities."

But the author's intermittent resort to such slippery terms of art—which in nearly anyone's prose scrape like nails on the proverbial chalkboard—will not seriously impede her general reader's enjoyment. The author of several popular works on science, Fara knows how to unveil an eighteenth-century panorama that will delight and instruct an audience swelling beyond her own peers. Stylistic infelicities aside (her watery lexical formulae are rendered lumpy by her undue reliance upon participial constructions), *Sympathetic Attractions* represents the history of science at its contemporary best.

Did you know that the Royal Navy was, during the eighteenth century, "by far the world's largest organization"? Neither did I. Nor did I know that Erasmus Darwin—botanical poetaster extraordinaire, grandfather to Charles Darwin and to Francis Dalton—"enlivened his dinner parties by sending an imitation magnetic spider scuttling across a silver salver." Or that Edmond Halley, posthumously commemorated in a comet, faced down his mutinous crew on the *Paramour* during a scientific voyage across the Atlantic in 1699. Or that navigators were so ignorant of the effects of iron on compasses "that the binnacle was used by Cook for storing the keys to his leg irons, by William Bligh for his pistols, and by soldiers as a convenient prop for their muskets." If one captain could not believe that a cargo of iron in the hold had sent compass readings haywire, many more banned garlic and onions from their vessels, fearing malign effects on compass readings. Some masters distrusted the instruments so much that they took bearings by viewing distant objects along their hands; as late as 1800 a do-it-yourselfer acquired the nickname of "Chop the Binnacle."

No lodestone is left unturned by the truffling Fara. Bountiful endnotes—tirelessly unearthed from commonplace books, tombstones, authorial marginalia, admiralty files, mathematical playing cards, and other recondite crevices—afford abundant opportunities for intellectual grazing. Not only can Fara find her way around a virtual museum of surviving instruments, but she also knows how miscellaneously machines were depicted: illustrations range from Henry Croker's perpetual motion contraption (which worked in Barbados) to engravings of therapeutic ordeals such as the tub of Mesmer. Especially enlightening are the performances Fara obtains from so many of the era's *literati*: not only do Dryden, Swift, Johnson, Frances Burney, Maria Edgeworth, Coleridge, and the Shelleys (among others) quicken *Sympathetic Attractions*, but Fara brings their magnetical musings and doings into sharp new focus.

About the pidgin mumbled by the scholarly herd when circulating in (or negotiating with) our brave new academic world of "blurred genres" and "interdisciplinarity" I have already kvetched. Yet *Sympathetic Attractions* shows that even methodologically shaky trees may bear fruit. Not only does Fara want to rout Whig historiographers of science who see the past merely as a prelude to their own superior enlightenment, but she also wishes to map cultural and material coordinates foreign to those of us who know how "scientist" achieved a first definition in 1833 when William Whewell coined it as an honorific for Faraday (that is, she demystifies "connotations concealed from modern viewers accustomed to compartmentalized knowledges and practices"). If her social constructionism remains trendy, Fara proceeds with an empirical gusto that exposes the myriad applications of magnets during the eighteenth century.

Before Faraday conjoined magnetism and electricity, the lodestone afforded spiritual alternatives to a Newtonian theory of action at a distance, a theory that British followers of Jacob Boehme and John Hutchinson saw as an affront to (their own version of) biblical revelation. "All things have *magnetical Effects* and *Instincts* towards God," declared William Law; the Bishop of Norwich asserted that Our Lord had revealed Himself as a magnet. In Christopher Smart's *Jubilate Agno* such pseudoscience flowered as magnificent poetry. Deftly anatomizing debates between Newtonians and Hutchinsonians (which also embodied political allegiances), Fara reminds us that intellectual trench warfare in church and university boasts a venerable and venomous lineage.

Theological and philosophical disputes did not interest mariners, who wanted Knight and other experimentalists to equip them with the most reliable instruments at the best price. Fara shows Knight's gifts as a huckster no less expertly than the trinitarian nuances of Hutchinson's ether. That there was a continuum between brazen charlatanry, intricate parlor tricks, splashy public presentations by bona fide practitioners, and what we would esteem today as laboratory experiment Fara demonstrates in a splendid series of examples, but she refrains from reducing science (as some historians have) to one deception among many.

Sympathetic Attractions overflows with good things, creakings and groanings notwithstanding. Does Fara succeed in unveiling the past as a foreign country? As I gaped at Hutchinson's dexterity with such jots and tittles as the claim that biblical pearls and rubies are really lodestones, I was reminded, abruptly, of such present day etymological strainings as those in Martin Bernal's much pilloried *Black Athena*. In my own time in school, I learned from my headmaster (whose Ph.D. had been supervised by Ernest Rutherford in the Cavendish Labs) that "atoms are God's billiard balls." Today this remains the only scientific fact about which I don't have to think twice: God may not play dice, but he does enjoy a nice game of snooker. Come to think of it, the present is a foreign country too.

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BRIEFLY NOTED

THE DIVERSITY MACHINE: THE DRIVE TO CHANGE THE "WHITE MALE WORKPLACE." By FREDERICK R. LYNCH. *Free Press. 416 pp. $27.50.*

Affirmative action has sustained some severe blows recently, but its commercial cousin, the diversity movement, has escaped close scrutiny until now. With this wide-ranging book, sociologist Frederick Lynch crushes the Potemkin Village of slogans, moralisms, and stereotypes that has shielded diversity management. The basic argument of the diversity mavens is that as America's population becomes increasingly diverse, so must its workforce. The cultural identities of a corporation's workers must be "valued" and "managed" to maintain a competitive edge in multicultural global markets. There is some truth to all this. But as with so many social innovations, its consequences far outstrip its intentions. Lynch traces the diversity movement from the affirmative action campaigns of the 1960s to its entrenchment in today's largest corporations. He documents the language and rationales of diversity trainers who browbeat personnel managers into hiring a workforce that "looks like America" and "reaching out" to the "underrepresented"—and who earn large fees providing subsequent training in "cultural sensitivity." While Lynch is respectful of the good intentions of many in the diversity movement, he demonstrates that blindness to internal group differences in age, religion, education, and even gender undercuts the validity of generalizations about group traits. Particularly valuable and entertaining are the anecdotes Lynch relates from his forays into the hyper-PC world of diversity: a personnel official at a major newspaper happily declaring that the paper was able to hire more minorities once it eliminated typing and spelling tests for applicants; an economist openly declaring, "I want equality of outcomes, not equal opportunity," while calling the 1992 Los Angeles riots "a long overdue insurrection." Analyzing "preference falsification" (the phrase coined by economist Timur Kuran for the mobilization of social pressure to make people publicly praise ideas as true that they privately believe to be false) Lynch shows that the diversity machine—with its underlying ideology of ethnic-gender proportionalism, cultural relativism, and identity politics—can only foment social acrimony. The relentless detail of Lynch's investigation will persuade anyone with an open mind of the problems created by the diversity movement in America's political and business culture.

— Brad Stetson

CHRISTOLOGY FROM WITHIN: SPIRITUALITY AND THE INCARNATION IN HANS URS VON BALTHASAR. By MARK A. MCINTOSH. *University of Notre Dame Press. 200 pp. $29.*

Modern Christology is largely driven by two issues: distance (the sense theologians have of how much divides us from the authors of the New Testament) and division (the separation between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith that emerged with historical criticism of the Bible). Balthasar's Christology addresses these issues by seeing in them a more fundamental issue: the gulf that separates the historical Jesus from *God*, who sent him to the Cross to bear our sins. In the darkness of his obedience Jesus experienced God's condemnation of sin, but the crucial point is that his obedience was both Incarnate and Trinitarian. Balthasar's Christology goes back directly to Peter's first sermon after the miracle of Pentecost: "Therefore let the whole house of Israel know that God has made this Jesus both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). Balthasar insists that no one can see this solution except through the same spiritual conversion for which Peter called. It is the great merit of Mark McIntosh's book that he has not only seen this essential connection between theology and spirituality in Balthasar's thought but has devised a way of demonstrating its necessity. As he points out, up until at least the High Middle Ages it seemed perfectly obvious to every Christian that a believer could not possibly reflect on "the mystery of God's presence in Jesus without attempting to participate in the spiritual journey marked out by Jesus himself," any more than one would dream of farming at night. Any survey of the place of theology in contemporary culture will surely bear the author out: as McIntosh says, "spirituality" and "theology" have now both become anemic versions of themselves. Few words even *sound* more vapid than "spirituality," and in most university settings theology is regarded as little better than alchemy. Only with a vigorous theology married to a tensile faith life will we meet the severe challenges of our time—the kind of theology that Balthasar has provided and that is so convincingly interpreted by his trustworthy Anglican reader, Mark McIntosh.

— Edward T. Oakes, S.J.

AQUINAS AND ANALOGY. By RALPH MCINERNY. *Catholic University of America Press. 178 pp. $39.95.*

The concept of analogy plays perhaps the central role in nearly all the projects undertaken by Thomas Aquinas. And since—as Thomas himself quotes from Aristotle—small errors in the beginning lead to large errors in the end, a correct initial understanding of what Thomas is up to with analogy remains necessary for understanding what positions he ultimately takes about God, man, the universe, and everything else. Ralph McInerny has had a long and almost impossibly distinguished career as a lecturer, essayist, mystery writer, editor, and one of America's most recognized Catholic philosophers. But he began his career as a scholar of Thomas, thinking about analogy, and it is to Thomistic analogy that he returns in this work—concerned particularly to correct five centuries of misinterpretation put in motion by the stalwart fifteenth-century Do-

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minican, Cardinal Cajetan. At issue is how it is possible to apply the adjective "good," for example, to God, humans, and apples. As Cajetan reads Aquinas, these very different subjects are good because the *ratio propria*—roughly, the proper sense—of "good" can be found in them all, taken individually. According to McInerny, however, we understand the conclusions Thomas reached about ultimate reality only when we grasp that a term's proper sense belongs to just one subject—God, in the case of goodness—while other subjects take their meaning analogously from that which defines the term uniquely. This is an important argument, and an important return by a major Catholic thinker to his old haunts. Be warned, however: Unlike some of McInerny's popular work, this is unabashedly scholarly, with significant chunks of Latin and Greek left untranslated at crucial moments in the argument. But for those readers willing to work their way through it, McInerny's thoughtful analysis shows where the argument about analogy and, consequently, much else in Thomas now stands.

— Stephen R. Grimm

The Encyclicals of John Paul II. Edited by J. Michael Miller. *Our Sunday Visitor. 1,008 pp. $49.95.*

There have been twelve encyclicals so far in this pontificate, and Father Miller, who teaches at the Gregorian University in Rome, here brings them together in one volume, offering intelligently helpful introductions to each. The official Vatican translations are used throughout, thus avoiding the sometimes misleading "inclusive" language that is indulged in other editions (even by the otherwise careful Daughters of St. Paul). This project is a very great service, and champions of John Paul II pray that this Pope produces twelve more encyclicals for a second volume.

Heaven on Earth: A Lutheran-Orthodox Odyssey. By Robert Tobias. *American Lutheran Publicity Bureau (Delhi, NY). 132 pp. $12.50 paper.*

Veteran ecumenist Tobias, who has been party to the official Lutheran-Orthodox theological dialogues, here offers a piquant account of his personal experiences with the encounter between these church communities, mainly in Eastern Europe but also in this country. This very accessible little book should encourage the growth of such encounters among Christians of all traditions.

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THE PUBLIC SQUARE

A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life

Richard John Neuhaus

Morality Successfully Imposed

A reader who has been keeping count claims that we've had six items in the past year poking fun at the antismoking crusade. What gives? she wants to know. It's probably not unrelated to my enjoying a cigar, but it's the sanctimonious tone of the crusade that provokes. At another level, I'm fascinated by the phenomenal success of an overtly moralistic movement in a time dominated by the dogma that you must not impose your morality on others.

Thomas Laqueur of the University of California at Berkeley reviews a number of books on smoking (meaning, mainly, cigarette smoking) and concludes with this: "They are the result of a new vision of what health means, or more precisely, of what death does not mean. It is telling, for example, that the Centers for Disease Control, in a recent calculation of the health costs of smoking, tallied up the total bill for the sicknesses of smokers and not just the increment that might be attributed to the habit itself. As if nonsmokers will enjoy eternal good health! There is something literally death-defying about the contemporary opposition to cigarettes, a kind of rage that anyone would not choose 2.2 years of 'healthy' life over a somewhat shortened and pleasurable existence, a resolute resistance to the intimations of death with which our ancestors knew how to live, and not only when they lit up. The debate about smoking—like the debate about euthanasia, suicide, the withholding of medical treatment, and the quality of life—would be deepened by the admission that life is itself a mortal illness, that the chimes of midnight are never as distant as we hope."

Laqueur is right, I think, about the mendacity stains on the antismoking crusade, and about the link with the denial of death. I can think, however, of no reason to encourage the cigarette habit and of many to discourage it. Among the latter is that, while people find cigarettes "pleasurable," they are not at all happy with their felt need to smoke them. Very large numbers wish they could quit, and one reason they wish that is because of the social pressure that views smoking as a vice—at least in America and, increasingly, in Europe.

Four centuries ago, tobacco ran riot around the world, entrenching itself in the collective psyche in a manner that became seductively associated with pleasure, sex, virility, women's liberation, and the denial of mortality. The last is as important for the smoking young as it is for the crusading antismokers of all ages. The crusade, some say, is provoking an increase in teenage smoking by providing another adult convention to defy. That seems plausible.

I don't know if the world would be a better place if nobody smoked. I'm sure it would be a better place if everybody, smokers and nonsmokers alike, were more considerate of the pleasures of others. And I do think there is an element of hope in the crusade's demonstration that moral appeal and censure can affect a behavior so widespread, although goodness knows there are evils much more in need of our moral attention.

FT

Recognition Before the End of Days

First published in 1948 and running through many reprints, *Christianity and Communism Today* by the late John C. Bennett laid down the "moderate" liberal line on the subject, a line that dominated mainline Protestant thinking up until the fall of the Soviet Union. John Bennett was a friend and a very gentle man. Long the president of Union Seminary in New York, he was thought to have inherited the mantle of Reinhold Niebuhr. His 1948 book was

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indeed moderate by comparison with the enthusiastic Marxism of the liberation theologians who were to come. Bennett's own *The Radical Imperative* of 1975 would, by comparison, make the earlier book appear to be an anti-Communist polemic.

Moderates typically set "socialism" and "capitalism" side by side, and found the former much superior as an ideal. In this view the idealistic Soviet experiment under Lenin was rudely distorted by Stalin, whose brutal character and methods discredited communism. This standard account has itself been discredited by scholars many times over, but perhaps never so decisively as in Richard Pipes' new book, *The Unknown Lenin* (Yale University Press). Lenin viewed utter ruthlessness as a virtue in dealing with his enemies, and especially with the Russian Orthodox Church. "The greater the number of representatives of the reactionary clergy and reactionary bourgeoisie we succeed in executing the better," he wrote to his assistants, and he wanted to be kept informed on how many clergy had been killed each day. In a 1918 directive demanding more executions, Lenin insisted that they be carried out in a way that would strike terror among the populace. "Do it in such a way that for hundreds of versts around the people will see, tremble, know, shout." (A verst is a little more than half a mile.)

A 1922 letter to the Politburo sets forth Lenin's view of the campaign against the church: "For us this moment is not only exceptionally favorable but generally the only moment when we can, with ninety-nine out of a hundred chances of total success, smash the enemy and secure for ourselves an indispensable position for many decades to comes. It is precisely now and only now, when in the starving regions people are eating human flesh, and hundreds if not thousands of corpses are littering the roads, that we can (and therefore must) carry out the confiscation of church valuables with the most savage and merciless energy, not stopping [short of] crushing any resistance. . . . We must, come what may, carry out the confiscation of church valuables in the most decisive and rapid manner, so as to secure for ourselves a fund of several hundred million gold rubles. . . . One wise writer on matters of statecraft [Machiavelli, *The Prince*, chapter eight] rightly said that if it is necessary to resort to certain brutalities for the sake of realizing a certain political goal, they must be carried out in the most energetic fashion and in the briefest time because the masses will not tolerate prolonged application of brutality. . . . Therefore, I come to the categorical conclusion that precisely at this moment we must give battle to the . . . clergy in the most decisive and merciless manner and crush its resistance with such brutality that it will not forget it for decades to come."

Indeed, the "battle" that resulted in the killing of hundreds of thousands of priests and nuns was not forgotten, except by Western apologists for Soviet tyranny. David Remnick recently interviewed Mikhail Gorbachev, who, among many other things, had this to say: "'I can only say that cruelty was the main problem with Lenin,' Gorbachev added. 'Had the Russians continued along the path of the February revolution, had they continued on a path of political pluralism, it would have been a different situation. Russia at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century was developing quite dynamically, and had they gone on that way it would have been much better.'"

Remnick comments: "What a remarkable admission! Here was a man who had struggled for and finally inherited the top position in the Party admitting that, yes, Russia would have been better off had those two signposts of his life and beliefs—the October revolution and Lenin himself—never existed. Instead, Russia might have flourished if the leaders of the decidedly bourgeois February revolution had been strong enough to ward off the Bolsheviks and develop more or less in synch with the democratic, capitalist West."

Others Understood

Coming from Gorbachev, it is a remarkable admission. Yet those who made the effort to understand understood this from the beginning. Lenin, Pipes, the Remnick interview, John C. Bennett—these come together in this reflection prompted by a reader who is writing on Bennett and wants to know whether I think he was a "cold warrior." Yes, the earlier Bennett, more directly under the influence of Niebuhr, was a cold warrior, which I take not to be a term of opprobrium. After World War II, in a period often described as "the end of ideology," anti-Communism was supported by a firm liberal consensus. By the late sixties, however, Bennett, like so many others, became a fervent anti-anti-Communist. Vietnam had everything to do with it. That tragically failed policy was construed not as an aberration but as an exemplification of America's perfidious role in the world. Thirty years later, that construal is widely established as orthodoxy in the academy and other institutions of the knowledge class.

It is good to have Pipes' exposé of Lenin and Gorbachev's acknowledgment of the obvious, but the West is still a very long way from appreciating the full horror of the Evil Empire. Although the death toll of communism is many times greater than that of Nazism, we have nothing comparable to the literature on the Holocaust that has so indelibly imprinted that monstrous evil on our minds. This is a great loss for Christians, who are generally unaware that this century has seen more martyrs for the faith than all the prior centuries combined. Despite the heroic efforts of Solzhenitsyn and a few others, the martyrs under communism are not known in the West. During the long years of the Cold War, those who tried to lift them up were

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derided as dangerous anti-Communists who threatened peaceful coexistence with the Soviet Union, and threatened to make the United States look better by comparison with the unspeakably bad. The Soviet empire is buried, but the habits of anti-anti-communism live on.

At the End of Days, the martyrs who died in the Gulag Archipelago will rise by the millions from beneath the frozen earth of Siberia.

> Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, clothed in white robes, and whence have they come?" I said to him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night within his temple."

But they should not have to wait for their recognition until the End of Days. It is we, not they, who need their recognition. It is we, more than they, who need to understand why it is that so many Christians in the West were, and still are, blind—willfully blind, it would seem—to the testimony of the martyrs.

FT

Above All, No Offense

A fundraising letter from the B'nai B'rith Foundation of the U.S. urges people to send in money to help "expose and overturn" last year's resolution of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) to support the evangelization of Jews. "Please, send as much as you can afford without delay. For the sake of our Jewish children. Our Jewish grandchildren," the letter appeals. The SBC resolution, it says, is "both condescending and contemptuous." "AT B'NAI B'RITH WE HAVE A SIMPLE MESSAGE FOR THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION: LEAVE OUR CHILDREN ALONE." Evangelization as child abuse? As though the SBC resolution targeted Jewish children. It is another instance of a growing phenomenon in which public advocacy today, whether pro or con almost anything, is pitched in terms of "our children."

It is especially interesting in this case because on almost any other subject most liberal parents—and most Jews are liberal—insist that they want their children to "be exposed to alternative viewpoints," to "make up their own minds," and so forth. B'nai B'rith is right, however: the religious training of children is too important to be left to chance. (Although its vague references to Jewish "heritage" and "values" leave it unclear whether B'nai B'rith is concerned about religion.) I hold no brief for the SBC resolution, and in fact have grave reservations about it. Among other things, it is premised upon an individualistic notion of salvation that neglects what St. Paul describes as the "mystery" of the continuing relationship between Israel and the Church (see Romans 9-11). I did have a brief comment in this space explaining why the SBC resolution is not anti-Semitic, for which Jacob Heilbrunn, in a notorious article in *The New Republic*, suggested I was an anti-Semite. As Irving Kristol has observed, the problem for Jewish parents is not that Christians hate their children, but that they want to marry them.

Moreover, B'nai B'rith seems not to understand that, in asking the SBC to "repeal" its resolution, it is asking Southern Baptists to abandon what is for them an article of faith, namely, that it is the obligation of Christians to try to bring absolutely everybody, including Jews, to a "saving knowledge of Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior." B'nai B'rith says the SBC resolution is "deeply offensive" in its "basic lack of respect for Judaism as a sister religion." Many years ago, sociologist John Murray Cuddihy wrote an insightful book, *No Offense*, in which he argued that the "etiquette" of liberal Protestantism had established the civic dogma that all religious truths are equal—or at least the truths of enlightened Protestants, Catholics, and Jews.

But there are many Christians, perhaps most, and a significant number of Jews, who do not subscribe to that dogma. They are the people who take pluralism seriously, knowing that pluralism does not mean indifference to the truths that make the deepest difference. In a pluralistic society, communities of robust faith prepare their children to engage within the bond of civility truth claims contrary to their own. Of course, B'nai B'rith is free to try to pressure Southern Baptists into denying what they believe, but that is a campaign with a very low prospect of success. Nor does it seem a very promising way to secure the civic amity and mutual respect between Christians and Jews for which we are all responsible.

FT

Michael Baxter and the Theological Salad Bar

Last time I discussed Father Michael Baxter's *Pro Ecclesia* article in which he excoriates theologians

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and historians who suggest a too-neat fit between Catholicism and the American Way of Life. Fr. Baxter is at the epicenter of a furious dispute at the University of Notre Dame. The theology faculty refused him an appointment to the department, the president of the university appointed him anyway, and the faculty senate then censured the president. Amidst all the charges and countercharges, I confess to finding myself in an unusual position.

You may recall that I was critical of Fr. Baxter for his construing of Christianity "within the limits of morality alone." That is the same question around which Stanley Hauerwas of Duke University and I have been conducting a friendly argument for years and years. Hauerwas is Baxter's mentor and was his dissertation director at Duke. Father Richard McBrien, who was for many years chairman of theology at Notre Dame and is now head of the faculty senate, is the sworn enemy of Hauerwas, whom he accuses, as he accuses Baxter, of being "sectarian." The hostility of McBrien played a significant part in Hauerwas' leaving Notre Dame after fourteen years and going to Duke. So you see how the plot thickens.

For Hauerwas and Baxter, the Great Satan is "liberalism" and all its works, and all its pomps, and all its ways. In their view, the American political experiment is liberal to its rotten core, and Baxter in particular thinks the very core of the core is the First Amendment that pretends the state is "neutral" to religion when in fact it is an insidious instrument for taking Christianity captive to provide "legitimation" for a capitalist, consumerist, warmongering society. His is a very severe indictment indeed.

I believe Hauerwas and Baxter are wrong about many things, but they are intelligently wrong on things very much worth arguing about. We share the conviction that authentic Christianity must be, in many respects, emphatically countercultural. This is inescapably the case with respect to the conflict between the "culture of life" and the "culture of death" so powerfully described in, for example, the encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*. (The old guard at Notre Dame has a demonstrated talent for complexifying the "simplistic" formulations of such as Pope John Paul II.) At the same time, Baxter in particular has a social, political, and economic analysis that leads him to unambiguously assault aspects of the American condition that I believe should be supported, albeit critically. Both the assault and the support must be subjected to rigorous interrogation.

As for Fr. McBrien and the ancien régime of theology at Notre Dame, they represent a generation that tends toward, to put it delicately, flabby and uncritical accommodationism. Catholicism is identified with the "Americanist" readiness to trim Catholic distinctives in order not to offend cultural sensibilities. Of course, that's how I describe their position; they say they are engaged in sympathetic dialogue with the culture. But most everyone agrees that for the establishment the alignments that matter are defined by the old liberal/conservative polarities. Liberalism as an abstraction can be criticized at the edges, but never in a way that might raise a doubt about one's being a liberal. For McBrien and his liberal colleagues, the chief foe is a Vatican that gets in the way of a thoroughly "Americanized" Church. Baxter and those of like mind think that Americanization is not the solution but the problem.

Baxter is on most questions a theological conservative, but on matters social and political he is pretty much an unexpurgated lefty, as was the case with his heroine, Dorothy Day of the Catholic Worker movement. His politics would be no problem for Notre Dame, were it not driven by a theology so suspiciously orthodox. Father Lawrence Cunningham, current head of the theology department, says that, since Baxter has been imposed on them, he wants to make him feel at home. "I've always argued that the Catholic tradition is like a big salad bar," Cunningham says. "There are a lot of things you can put on your plate, and one of those is a religious identity that stands against the predominant culture." It's hard to have a really good argument with a salad bar. Baxter wants an argument, and he wants it to be a theological argument.

He doesn't buy it when Cunningham says the Catholic approach is "both/and" rather than "either/or." That, says Baxter, is a logical fallacy. "If one wishes to espouse a both/and approach in theology then one is logically compelled to allow *both* the both/and approach *and* the either/or approach." It is more than a nice debater's point. I know from limited experience that Father Either/Or Baxter can be a difficult man, but the theological difficulties he poses are very much needed by the bland and wilting salad bar Catholicism of the Notre Dame theology department. Perhaps the fact that I was so critical of him last month will prompt some in the department to look upon him more favorably. After all, if Neuhaus disagrees with him so strongly he can't be all that bad. That was not my intention in writing the piece, but I'm always glad to be of service.

FT

After Communitarianism

Whatever happened to the communitarian movement? It's still knocking about, not least of all in the halls of the current Administration in

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Washington. "Communitarianism" bespeaks a disposition that can take many forms, but its more recent epiphany as a movement is chiefly the work of sociologist Amitai Etzioni of George Washington University, who in the late 1980s orchestrated a Communitarian Manifesto to which a number of figures associated with FT, including this writer, subscribed. It was a Tocquevillian call to check the unbridled assertion of individualistic rights with the claims of community, tradition, and personal responsibility. At least that is how I and others understood it, but soon Prof. Etzioni was taking the initiative in directions where I and others could not go. After some friendly discussions of our differences, I quietly dissociated myself.

The New Communitarians and the Crisis of Modern Liberalism by Bruce Frohnen (University Press of Kansas) is a sharply critical treatment of the movement that highlights the ways in which the communitarian impulse has been hijacked by people such as Mario Cuomo and Hillary Clinton. Reviewing the book in the *Times Literary Supplement*, Roger Kimball shares Frohnen's misgivings. "We can get a hint of what communitarianism in action looks like from a speech that President Clinton's Secretary of Health and Human Services, Donna Shalala, delivered in 1991 when she was chancellor of the University of Wisconsin. Imagining what a typical little girl named Renata would be thinking and learning in the year 2004, Secretary Shalala reports that 'Renata doesn't know any moms who don't work, but she knows lots of moms who are single. She knows some children who have two dads, or live with their mothers and their grandmothers. In her school books, there are lots of different kinds of friends and families.' After school, Renata goes to a city-run day care center where 'sometimes, she and her best friend, Josh, play trucks, sometimes they play mommy and daddy, and Josh always puts the baby to bed and changes the diapers, just like his own dad does at home.' At Thanksgiving, Renata's teacher will tell a story about how people from Europe came to the United States, where the Indians lived. She will say, 'It was just the same as if someone had come into your yard and taken all your toys and told you they weren't yours anymore.'"

Shalala and others know that the egalitarian utopia they have in mind will not come about by itself. For that they need programs such as the federal "Goals 2000" Act, which sets up national standards in education for "gender-equitable and multicultural" teaching. While presenting themselves as champions of equality, these communitarians take it upon themselves to reeducate the rest of society. This troubles Frohnen: "Reeducation is by nature inegalitarian. In any program of reeducation a self-selected group of intellectuals asserts that it has the authority to decide what kind of character and belief everyone should have." I don't think we should be bothered by the inegalitarian nature of reeducation or education. That's inevitable. We should be bothered by the substance of what is taught, and by the exclusion of parents from a determinative say in what their children are taught.

Frohnen, Kimball, and others are also concerned about the communitarians' instrumental approach to "civil religion." Religion is a very good thing for social cohesion and the cultivation of virtues, but the benefits cannot be separated from commitment to the transcendent. The irony of communitarianism, says Frohnen, is that its adherents place themselves beyond the beliefs they seek to foster, and thus "sap the sources of the communal feelings they crave." This is a more serious criticism than the movement's offenses against egalitarianism.

Liberalism Beyond Crisis

That modern liberalism is in crisis no thoughtful person should doubt. I believe the crisis is, at bottom, one of authority. To put it too briefly, liberalism cannot give an account of obliging social and political truths that are in accord with human flourishing. Some years ago, the Urban League encouraged people to wear buttons declaring, "Give a damn"—meaning we should care about justice, the cities, the poor, the young, and so forth. But, put to the wall, modern liberalism cannot convincingly explain why we should give a damn. In 1971 John Rawls attempted such an explanation in *A Theory of Justice*, and it was all the rage for a long while. We haven't heard much about Rawls lately. *A Theory of Justice* turned out to be the last gasp of a liberalism whose crisis turned out to be terminal.

Etzioni and his colleagues were right to see that religion, and traditional communities grounded in religion, could give the convincing reasons that liberalism lacked. Frohnen may judge them too harshly on the basis of others, such as Mrs. Clinton and Secretary Shalala, who tried to use communitarianism to revive liberalism as we knew it. But Etzioni, too, had a blind spot when it came to religion. Religion is divisive, it was thought, while morality brings us together; let us therefore embrace the morality while steering clear of the religion. But, of course, they should not be, and finally cannot be, separated that way. In fact, the communitarian movement also wanted to steer clear of morality at the points where it threatened to be divisive. This was most notably the case with abortion. Etzioni wanted nothing to do with the question. And yet the most inescapable of communitarian questions is the question posed by abortion: Who belongs to the community for which we accept common responsibility?

As a theory and practice of politics, modern liberalism is not in crisis; it is dead. Political identity

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and political allegiance in this or any other society can be constituted only by the acknowledgment of obliging truths that direct us to care for one another in the service of a transcendent end (telos). As in "one nation under God"—meaning a people under judgment and providential care. Modern liberalism lost its telos a long time ago; it is all means without ends, and in recent years even the means went haywire. People such as Rawls tried to reconstitute the political community by reviving the old notion of the social contract. But the fictional persons behind Rawls' famously complicated "veil of ignorance" were essentially asking themselves only one question: "What's in it for me?" That's hardly the basis for reestablishing community.

To their credit, the communitarians realized that, and reached out to "tradition," "civil society," and other sources that supply meanings that are more than the product of individual willfulness. With the passing of communitarianism, or perhaps with the beginning of a quite new phase of communitarianism, serious political thought is moved slowly, hesitantly, protestingly, to the question of ends. The movement is so painfully reluctant because it is rightly intuited that there is no way of engaging the question of telos without, in one way or another, deliberating the ultimate end by which penultimate ends are made morally compelling. For secular liberals, this is not where modernity was supposed to end up.

FT

WHAT MADELEINE ALBRIGHT KNEW, AND DIDN'T DO ABOUT IT

I don't know Secretary of State Madeleine Albright well. When she was Ambassador to the United Nations and President Bush had appointed me to a commission examining U.S. policy toward that organization, she came across in meetings as a very capable and no-nonsense sort of person. I was favorably impressed. Now there is this business about her family being Jewish and some of them having perished in the Holocaust. The daughter of a Czechoslovakian diplomat, she was baptized in the Catholic Church, reared in London and the U.S., and became Episcopalian when she married many years ago. It is not clear how much she knew of her past, but apparently she decided to put it firmly behind her.

There has been much chatter in the press about how the discovery of her Jewish background means she must now struggle with changing her "identity." Some have unkindly speculated about her being an opportunist who climbed the social ladder from Jew to Catholic to Episcopalian. In what world are they living? Today the progression of ascendancy is the reverse, with Jews being the most successful by almost every index of success, and Catholics of European descent not far behind. A movie star was asked why he claimed to be Jewish when he wasn't. "Simple," he answered, "I'm a social climber." Some have suggested that Albright feared that the "taint" of being Jewish would prevent her from becoming Secretary of State. Maybe they should talk to Henry Kissinger.

Whatever she did or did not know about her background, it contained horrors and ambiguities about which she seemed to be determinedly uncurious. She decided to get on with her life. One can imagine perfectly honorable and intensely personal reasons for such a decision. One writer to the *New York Times* says, "The only possible interpretation of this secrecy is that she doesn't like being a Jew." That is malicious nonsense. The one thing that is most striking to me in the discussion to date is that nobody has mentioned the possibility that Secretary Albright is a convinced Christian. Because she was as a child presumably—and there is good reason to doubt this—baptized for reasons of expediency, it is assumed by some that, having discovered her Jewishness, she should drop her accidental Christianity and embrace her identity as a Jew. As the *Times* editors put it in a heading over a slew of letters on the subject, "Secretary Albright Must Embrace Her Past to Shape the Future."

Secretary Albright's father did not become a Christian and have his daughter baptized in order to escape from Nazi occupation. That happened after they were already settled in London. Against those who depict her father's religious decision in opportunistic colors, there is also the fact that he became a Catholic, a distinctly downmarket connection at that time in England. Had he an eye to upward mobility, he would have joined the Church of England. In any event, I don't know what Secretary Albright knew about her background, or what she decided or why she decided it. Since I'm not her spiritual director, I have no need to know. Nor does anybody else. Maybe she will offer further public explanations. And maybe not. That's her business. Meanwhile, she is an impressive lady and I wish her well.

FT

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Who Will Rid Us of This Turbulent Democracy?

A coalition government headed by Prime Minister Necmettin Erbaken is, according to his opponents, leading Turkey in a "dangerously religious" direction. Stephen Kinzer of the *New York Times* reports from Ankara that self-described secularists are alarmed that "Kemalism," the rigorously secularizing project launched by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk seventy-four years ago, is in the process of being undone. The army and civil service have been the guardians of Ataturk's legacy, and over the years have routinely excluded from their ranks Muslims who are thought to be too religious. The principle is that religion and public life must be kept absolutely separate.

Says a spokesman for the foreign ministry, "Christians had a period of brutal fanaticism, but you also had your Renaissance. You have had hundreds of years to distance yourself from religious extremism, so now when your President puts his hand on the Bible to take the oath of office you don't see anything wrong. But in Turkey, our Renaissance began with Ataturk. We need time to let these ideas take hold." An academic specialist on Islam observes: "A veil is lifting in Turkey. As it lifts, we're seeing that this country is more religious than people think, and a million times more than secularists would like. The idea of a greater role for religion in public life has widespread support in Turkey. So as the country becomes more democratic, you see more Islamic influence."

Actually, Prime Minister Erbaken's Welfare Party seems to be quite moderate in the steps it is proposing. Speaking of veils lifting, for instance, the government has rescinded rules that prohibited female students and government workers from covering their heads. The changes are hardly radical, says Justice Minister Sevket Kazan, but "the press shouts that Turkey is on the way to becoming Iran or Algeria." "In liberal systems, people are supposed to be free to act as they please. If a woman wants to cover her hair with a scarf, she should be able to do that without being discriminated against. If that isn't possible, then her human rights are being violated." Nonetheless, the combination of democracy and talk about human rights has some secularists talking about the prospect of "civil war."

The claim that in the West the fanaticism of Christianity was tempered by the Renaissance is piquantly ill-informed. In the Anglo-American experience especially, Christianity was the full partner, indeed committed Christians were the driving force, in the development of the ideas and institutions of democracy. The comparison with Ataturk does not hold at all. However wise on many scores, he was a dictator who by raw force drove a wedge between state and society. His radically secularized state could be maintained only at the expense of democracy by excluding the convictions and habits of the people from everything defined as "public." He decreed, and by military power imposed, a naked public square, and it isn't working in Turkey any more than it can work anywhere else.

The resurgence of society in Turkey, including its religious dynamics, is part of the worldwide phenomenon described by Samuel Huntington in *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order.* Of course there are worrying aspects in this, not least being the dismal record of Islamic societies when it comes to democracy and religious freedom for non-Muslims. If they can overcome their ideological secularism, elites in Turkey might welcome the prospect of their country becoming a demonstration that Islam and democracy are not incompatible. Rather than embracing that challenge, however, those who have been in charge for most of this century seem prepared to forego democracy. In taking the position that the stark choice is between rigid secularism and religious fanaticism, they take the side of Stephen Kinzer and the paper for which he writes. It is also the position of religious fanatics, of whom there are some here and no doubt many in Turkey. If the choice between fanaticisms, whether secular or religious, is the only thing on offer, the prospects for democracy are dim and talk about civil war may not be alarmist.

FT

The End of Courtship

The above is the title of a splendid article by Leon Kass in the Winter 1997 issue of the *Public Interest.* Leon and his wife Amy, both professors at the University of Chicago, are preparing a book on the subject of marriage and courtship for one of our institute projects dealing with what we call "everyday ethics." In this article, Kass declares himself rather pessimistic about the prospects of rebuilding cultural patterns that have been undermined by dynamics so deep and pervasive.

"Here is a (partial) list of the recent changes that hamper courtship and marriage: the sexual revolution, made possible especially by effective female contraception; the ideology of feminism and the changing educational and occupational status of women; the destigmatization of bastardy, divorce, infidelity, and abortion; the general erosion of shame and awe regarding sexual matters, exemplified most vividly in the ubiquitous and voyeuristic

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presentation of sexual activity in movies and on television; widespread morally neutral sex education in schools; the explosive increase in the numbers of young people whose parents have been divorced (and in those born out of wedlock, who have never known their father); great increases in geographic mobility, with a resulting loosening of ties to place and extended family of origin; and, harder to describe precisely, a popular culture that celebrates youth and independence not as a transient stage en route to adulthood but as 'the time of our lives,' imitable at all ages, and an ethos that lacks transcendent aspirations and asks of us no devotion to family, God, or country, encouraging us simply to soak up the pleasures of the present."

Like a growing number of cultural critics who are not Catholic, Kass has come to conclusions regarding contraception that are similar to the prophetic warnings contained in Paul VI's 1968 encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*.

"The sexual revolution that liberated (especially) female sexual desire from the confines of marriage, and even from love and intimacy, would almost certainly not have occurred had there not been available cheap and effective female birth control—the pill—which for the first time severed female sexual activity from its generative consequences. Thanks to technology, a woman could declare herself free from the teleological meaning of her sexuality—as free as a man appears to be from his. Her menstrual cycle, since puberty a regular reminder of her natural maternal destiny, is now anovulatory and directed instead by her will and her medications, serving goals only of pleasure and convenience, enjoyable without apparent risk to personal health and safety. Woman on the pill is thus not only freed from the practical risk of pregnancy; she has, wittingly or not, begun to redefine the meaning of her own womanliness. Her sexuality unlinked to procreation, its exercise no longer needs to be concerned with the character of her partner and whether he is suitable to be the father and co-rearer of her yet-to-be-born children. Female sexuality becomes, like male, unlinked to the future. The new woman's anthem: Girls just want to have fun. Ironically, but absolutely predictably, the chemicals devised to assist in family planning keep many a potential family from forming, at least with a proper matrimonial beginning.

"Sex education in our elementary and secondary schools is an independent yet related obstacle to courtship and marriage. Taking for granted, and thereby ratifying, precocious sexual activity among teenagers (and even pre-teens), most programs of sex education in public schools have a twofold aim: the prevention of teenage pregnancy and the prevention of venereal disease, especially AIDS. While some programs also encourage abstinence or noncoital sex, most are concerned with teaching techniques for 'safe sex'; offspring (and disease) are thus treated as (equally) avoidable side effects of sexuality, whose true purpose is only individual pleasure. (This I myself did not learn until our younger daughter so enlightened me, after she learned it from her seventh-grade biology teacher.) The entire approach of sex education is technocratic and, at best, morally neutral; in many cases, it explicitly opposes traditional morals while moralistically insisting on the equal acceptability of any and all forms of sexual expression provided only that they are not coerced. No effort is made to teach the importance of marriage as the proper home for sexual intimacy."

The Problem with Hamlet

Leon and Amy Kass have been teaching a course on courtship at the university, and have noted significant changes in student attitudes. This in a footnote: "In years past, students identified with Hamlet because of his desire to make a difference in the world. Today, they identify with him because of his 'broken home'—the death of his father and the too-hasty remarriage of his mother. Thus, to them it is no wonder that he, like they, has trouble in his 'relationships.'" It is hard to overestimate the impact of divorce.

"The ubiquitous experience of divorce is also deadly for courtship and marriage. Some people try to argue, wishfully against the empirical evidence, that children of divorce will marry better than their parents because they know how important it is to choose well. But the deck is stacked against them. Not only are many of them frightened of marriage, in whose likely permanence they simply do not believe, but they are often maimed for love and intimacy. They have had no successful models to imitate; worse, their capacity for trust and love has been severely crippled by the betrayal of the primal trust all children naturally repose in their parents, to provide that durable, reliable, and absolutely trustworthy haven of permanent and unconditional love in an otherwise often unloving and undependable world.

"Countless students at the University of Chicago have told me and my wife that the divorce of their parents has been the most devastating and life-shaping event of their lives. They are conscious of the fact that they enter into relationships guardedly and tentatively; for good reason, they believe that they must always be looking out for number one. Accordingly, they feel little sense of devotion to another and, their own needs unmet, they are not generally eager for or partial to children. They are not good bets for promise keeping, and they haven't enough margin for generous service. And many of the fatherless men are themselves unmanned for fatherhood, except in the purely biological sense. Even where they dream of meeting a true love, these children of divorce have a hard time finding,

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winning, and committing themselves to the right one."

Our troubles did not begin yesterday, Kass notes. "The separation of sex from procreation achieved in this half century by contraception was worked out intellectually much earlier; and the implications for marriage were drawn in theory well before they were realized in practice. Immanuel Kant, modernity's most demanding and most austere moralist, nonetheless gave marriage a heady push down the slippery slope: Seeing that some marriages were childless, and seeing that sex had no necessary link to procreation, Kant redefined marriage as 'a life-long contract for the mutual exercise of the genitalia.' If this be marriage, the reason for its permanence, exclusivity, and fidelity vanishes."

The article concludes on a dour but not despairing note. "But it would appear to require a revolution to restore the conditions most necessary for successful courtship: a desire in America's youth for mature adulthood (which means for marriage and parenthood), an appreciation of the unique character of the marital bond, understood as linked to generation, and a restoration of sexual self-restraint generally and of female modesty in particular.

"Frankly, I do not see how this last, most crucial, prerequisite can be recovered, nor do I see how one can do sensibly without it. As Tocqueville rightly noted, it is women who are the teachers of mores; it is largely through the purity of her morals, self-regulated, that woman wields her influence, both before and after marriage. Men, as Rousseau put it, will always do what is pleasing to women, but only if women suitably control and channel their own considerable sexual power. Is there perhaps some nascent young feminist out there who would like to make her name great and who will seize the golden opportunity for advancing the truest interest of women (and men and children) by raising (again) the radical banner, 'Not until you marry me'? And, while I'm dreaming, why not also, 'Not without my parents' blessing'?"

FT

When the Women Take Over

Kenneth Woodward of *Newsweek* offers a spirited challenge to the feminization of American religion. Writing in *Commonweal*, he takes on the favored shibboleths of those who contend that Christianity "privileges" the male, and along the way has some important things to say about movements among Christian men such as Promise Keepers. "As I read it, the message of the Christian Men's Movement is this: Following Jesus is not for women only, nor is it merely a spectator sport, which it tends to become for men in our domesticated, mostly female congregations. Consciously or unconsciously, the movement also validates an insight which sociologists confirm: The best predictor of whether a child will remain religious as an adult is not the religiosity of the mother—for children tend to take that for granted—but of the father, because he is not expected to be religious. That is, if the father demonstrates that religion is not foreign to what a man is and does, the child—especially the male child—is much more likely to be religious upon reaching adulthood."

Woodward is not encouraged by the statistics about the rising number of women in the seminaries. "Many are entering second careers, often after failing to find either success or fulfillment in their first choices. Many of the women, in particular, are divorced, quite a few are middle-aged, and many are single mothers." In addition: "Not only is feminist theology widely taught in seminaries, but the informal curriculum is also frankly and ideologically feminist. Not surprisingly, Protestant seminaries are also home to large numbers of lesbians and gay men. Anyone acquainted with Episcopal seminaries, for example, can tell you which ones cater to lesbians and gays. Some seminaries have housing especially for homosexuals. Catholics who fear the celibate priesthood is attracting too high a proportion of gay men should look at what is happening—what in fact has been institutionalized—at interdenominational and mainline Protestant seminaries. None of this augurs well for the masculine presence in the ministry—if by masculine we also mean heterosexual."

Woodward invokes Walter Ong's insightful and undeservedly neglected book, *Fighting for Life* (Cornell University Press, 1981), that contends masculine and feminine are human contraries in a "ritual contest" that shapes maleness from "its biological base to its human heights." Ong notes that the Church is always and overwhelmingly feminine—Holy Mother Church—and in that feminine environment the all-male clergy is a necessary countervailing force.

Woodward concludes: "I have spent time on the Protestant experience because I want to indicate not only what is happening among our Christian brethren but also to suggest that the loosening of this dynamic tension may be one reason why mainline denominations are in such dire straits. The church as a profession is not like the law, medicine, or finance. Women who enter these professions do not change them; they are changed by the professions,

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and if they do not perform well they are out. But religion is different. Whatever else it is, religion is a symbol system and to change the symbols is to change the meaning that religion expresses. Surely there is need to incorporate, expand, and deepen what is feminine in religion. But there are limits. And as we can see in the exponents of post-Christian feminism, those limits have already been breached. My concern is not with theory or theology but with the atmosphere of ordinary American churches as I find them. And what I find in them is the gradual disappearance of anything that might adequately be described as masculine, no matter who in the hierarchy is calling the shots."

FT

WHILE WE'RE AT IT

■ Not everybody is so fortunate as Sarah H. of Boston. She has this very intelligent nephew in graduate school and included him on her list of family members, friends, and associates to whom we sent a sample issue of FT. Now a regular reader, he's telling everyone in the family about his smart Aunt Sarah in Boston. They always knew she had money, but thought she was a bit on the slow side. But that's only because she thinks before speaking. There's no telling what might happen if you send us your list. Please do so soon. Like today.

■ There's a great to do over a certain Arab-British zillionaire who is rumored to be spreading money about in order to buy favorable media attention. Neil Simon of the *Spectator* doubts the truth of the rumors and concludes his skeptical rumination with this: "You cannot hope / to bribe or twist / thank God! the / British journalist. / But, seeing what / the man will do / unbribed, there's no / occasion to." Needless to say, the traits of the journalistic fraternity are thoroughly international. It is another Brit who tells it all best. Preparing to go to the airport and St. Louis recently, I looked about my study for some light flight reading and settled on Evelyn Waugh's *Scoop*, which I hadn't returned to for years. Its portrayal of William Boot of the *Beast* is by far the most hilarious send-up of the scribbler's craft I've ever come across. By an improbable series of errors, the innocent Boot is sent off to cover a nonexistent civil war in Ishmaelia (a.k.a. Ethiopia), and a fellow journalist has to explain to him why it is important to beat the competition in sending back stories: "You know, you've got a lot to learn about journalism. Look at it this way. News is what a chap who doesn't care much about anything wants to read. And it's only news until he's read it. After that it's dead. We're paid to supply news. If someone else has sent a story before us, our story isn't news." Through many farcical twists and turns, Boot scoops the competition and returns to England a national hero. There he meets an admiring young man who dreams of being a reporter like his hero Boot. The young man has been to a school of journalism and explains to Boot that he practices by imagining a big news story and then trying to write it up. "Do you think it's a good way of training oneself—inventing imaginary news?" he asks. "None better," says Boot. It's a great book, but I suppose I should go easy on journalists. In St. Louis I was introduced as a distinguished theologian, social critic—"and a noted journalist." I pleaded innocent but the damage was done.

■ Reviewing Philip Gleason's excellent history of Catholic higher education, *Contending with Modernity*, our premier evangelical church historian, Mark Noll of Wheaton, says Gleason's argument has much wider application. "What this Catholic story offers to believers of other flavors can be put bluntly: While solid, well-defined theological boundaries can be enforced in ways that stifle productive Christian thinking, sustained, meaningful, doxological Christian thought will not flourish unless such boundaries exist in some form." Noll concludes: "In the end, Protestants who are interested in higher education have a special reason to read Gleason's story with sympathy. Zealous evangelicals who retain the anti-Catholic instincts of former days sometimes think that when their fellow Protestants begin to take an interest in the Catholic Church or to make sympathetic noises about Catholic beliefs, practices, and institutions, the moth has begun to circle the flame. In fact, there is a better metaphor that more accurately reflects both historical reality (Protestantism emerged from Roman Catholicism and has always required the Catholic Church to define itself) and the realities of modern Christian demography (where there are about three times as many Roman Catholics as Protestants on the face of the earth). The more apt metaphor is of a Protestant moon orbiting a Roman Catholic earth. In a heliocentric universe, the dance of orbits and revolutions means that the sun's light shines more directly now on parts of the moon, now on parts of the earth. But the earth is a lot bigger and, at least for this analogy, was certainly there first. In the terms of such an image, what happens on the earth—for example, what is portrayed with such luminous clarity and such thoughtfulness in *Contending with Modernity*—could not be more important for the future of the moon."

■ The former Rector of St. Paul's School in Concord, New Hampshire, David V. Hicks, says that elite boarding schools have fallen on hard times.

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Enrollments are down, costs are up (typically more than $20,000 per year), and the schools—whether Andover, Choate, Groton, or St. Paul's—are floundering in their efforts to adapt to changed circumstances. In 1910, Woodrow Wilson addressed the Lawrenceville School: "A great school like this does not stop with what it does in the class room; . . . it organizes *life* from morning to night; and it does so when at its best by an intimate association of the teacher with the pupil, so that the impact of the mature mind upon the less mature will be constant and influential." Central to the elite schools, says Hicks, was "the Christian faith as its organizing principle [which] provided ritual, ceremony, and a coherent set of norms, although it seldom invited a confession of faith or inspired a conversion." Many things have changed, including suburbanization, competition from quality day schools, and the desire to be "inclusive" of diverse peoples and religious traditions. But perhaps the biggest change, according to Hicks, is the development of a separate youth culture which makes impossible Wilson's organized life from morning to night. "Boarding schools are struggling to survive in a society that has redefined the adolescent as a consumer—a consumer of fast foods, movies, fashions, videos, CDs, drugs, alcohol, pornography, cigarettes, sports, and pop heroes. Adolescent appetites, not adult concerns, dominate the boarding-school market, and to compete for this new consumer's attention, the boarding school has tried to appeal to the mercurial tastes and insatiable appetites of the adolescent." Like so much else in our culture, the elite boarding school assumed that the adult knew better than the adolescent and that it is a self-evident good that mature minds should form the less mature. Explaining why this has so dramatically changed has less to do with adolescent rebellion, which is nothing new, than with adult loss of confidence, which has been a dominant feature of our society for the last thirty years. People who were shaped by the youth culture of the sixties remember it as their finest hour, and have never really left it. Although they may now be fifty-five or more, they are "keeping faith" with their past and refuse to "sell out" to adulthood. At Groton, Choate, and St. Paul's, these are the people mainly in charge. Not to mention the White House.

■ Paris holds a week-long Christian film festival, and last year there was a fuss about the choice of *Blade Runner*, a violent science-fiction film, and *The Bridges of Madison County*, which has an adulteress as its heroine. The theme of the 1996 festival was *Le Mal et la Grace*, evil and grace. An organizer of the program explained, "It is doubtful whether we could find enough religious films of quality to justify a week-long festival." Thank God there is no shortage of evil films?

■ Of course ours is not the only journal that has to make an annual fund appeal. There is, for instance, *Free Inquiry*, published by the Council for Secular Humanism. But they are not as much help to our appeal as we are to theirs. Their fundraising letter begins with a quote by yours truly that is critical of John Stuart Mill, and then suggests that I am "the Religious Right's leading intellectual." I hope my very liberal brother is not on their mailing list. We have troubles enough in the family. The letter continues: "From the urbanity of Rev. Neuhaus to the populist grandstanding of a Pat Robertson, the Religious Right speaks in many voices." Urbanity. That has a nice ring to it. I don't know which Pat Robertson they have in mind, but "populist grandstanding" is not the way I would describe the one I have met on several occasions. The letter continues by citing a recent Gallup poll showing that, on a host of questions, Americans are "appallingly" conservative. "After decades of activism, the Religious Right has seized the moral imagination of the American center." They're making my day. More: "'After the end of Marxism,' writes Richard John Neuhaus, 'Christianity provides the only coherent, comprehensive, compelling, and promising vision of the human future.' Millions of Americans believe that. *You* know it's not true. *So do we.* With your help, we can continue to *say so* in ways that cannot be ignored." We're all attention.

■ Now stay with me here, as that little rich fellow from Texas who ran for President used to say. Just war is a heavy-duty topic, and in the last several years, partly because the Cold War is over, it is a topic much neglected. All credit, therefore, to the *National Interest*, which has two fine articles on the subject by James Turner Johnson ("A Broken Tradition") and A. J. Bacevich ("Morality and High-Tech"). In recent moral reflection on war, says Johnson, a wiggly principle of "presumption against war" has been widely accepted. The problem with this principle, he believes, is that it is no principle at all. It is rather a prudential judgment based upon contingent ideas about the nature of modern warfare. The prudential conditions that make for a justified war (*jus ad bellum*)—that it produce a preponderance of good over evil, have a reasonable chance of success, be a last resort, and that its expected outcome be peace—are matters for competent political authorities, not moralists, to determine. Johnson writes: "In other words, these lesser but still very important concerns pertain to the function of statecraft, not moral analysis. The role of the moralist is to insist on the application of the three essential, noncontingent elements of *jus ad bellum*—just cause, competent authority, right intention—and to specify that the prudential elements be taken into account. But the moralist is not to usurp the role of statecraft by specifying how

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they are to be applied in specific instances. The 'presumption against war' view, by reversing the weight of essential and contingent considerations, would vitiate statecraft and presume to tell sovereigns how to conduct their affairs—a most worldly and untraditional presumption at that. From the perspective of moral reasoning, too, it gives pride of place to judgments about contingent conditions over obligations inherent in moral duty."

■ If we are to believe the review by Thomas C. Berg, professor of law at Samford University, H. Jefferson Powell's *The Moral Tradition of American Constitutionalism: A Theological Interpretation* (Duke University Press) is a deeply confused book. And it appears Prof. Berg participates in the confusion. Here is Berg's presentation of Powell's argument: "While the Court is a 'centralizing and homogenizing agent . . . of social change,' allocating authority to other bodies, from Congress to local school boards, can 'increase . . . the variety of decisionmakers available to hear and respond to deviant or weak voices.'" So we have two evangelical conservatives blithely assuming that the Supreme Court is to be an agent of social change. Going even further, it is suggested that the Court should "allocate" some of its authority to legislative and other elected bodies. What a very democratic idea, to let the people and their representatives have a say in the judicial rule of the country. Berg also considers the book's discussion of natural law and the author's view that natural justice requires "that states must protect the unborn: that is, that courts should strike down the liberalized abortion laws that exist in many states." Certainly justice requires the protection of the unborn, but it is a wonder that, twenty-four years after *Roe*, law professors are not aware that in that decision the Supreme Court abolished, in one fell swoop, all abortion laws in all fifty states. As Judge John Noonan wrote many years ago, it is the first time in history that any nation simply abolished all law pertaining to a very big category of human beings. If this is not known to professors of law, it is perhaps unsurprising that a large majority of adult Americans think abortion is now available only in the first trimester, and then only in exreme circumstances.

■ There are these wistful hopes expressed from time to time that the great Midwest might well save the nation from the cultural rot creeping in from the coasts. It is more a gallop than a creep. Here's an item from the Minneapolis *Star Tribune* that declares with deep regional pride: "The Druids are among dozens of Pagan groups in the Twin Cities area, which is believed to have one of the highest concentrations in the country. . . . The emergence of licensed ministers and congregations is evidence of the shift in attitude by a public that once demonized Paganism." Minnesota has licensed Pagan ministers to visit in state prisons, "just as non-Pagan clergy do." There are also several gay, lesbian, and bisexual covens. "For my stepdad, Paganism conjures up images of people running around naked in the woods, having orgies and butchering babies," says Sarah DeMay, twenty-eight, of Minneapolis. "He would rather talk about my being bisexual." Don't worry, at the rate we're defining deviancy down, he'll probably be ready for the normality of paganism by this time next year. "The tensions between traditional and 'free-form' followers are part of the movement's growing pains. Three years ago, the Minneapolis-based Wiccan Church of Minnesota felt the need to define stands for being Wiccan. 'We've lost members because we weren't exclusionary enough,' said Robin Reyburn, the church's minister. 'We have several different traditions in our church. Sometimes the hardest thing is having that diversity.'" It's the narrow orthodoxy of those Wiccan Lefebvrists that makes it so hard to get along. Perhaps it's time for a Common Ground Initiative.

■ The people in charge of things, commonly called the elite, have for years been favored by the analytical attentions of sociologist Stanley Rothman, who now (along with coauthors Robert Lerner and Althea K. Nagai) brings his findings together in a new book out from Yale, *American Elites.* In the course of his review in *National Review*, David Frum of the Manhattan Institute has this to say: "As Rothman describes them, American elites are strikingly divided on most issues. But not on all: more than 70 percent of the members of every elite except the clergy support the right to an abortion. Among the more liberal elites—lawyers, journalists, moviemakers, and television producers and writers—support for abortion rights exceeds 90 per cent. More tellingly, adultery is the only form of sexual behavior that a large majority of members of American elites thinks wrong. It reveals something about the legalism of the American mind that the only ethical rule America's leaders still apply to human sexuality is that of promise-keeping." It may well have something to do with legalism, but one wonders if there isn't a deeper factor here, evident also in the enormous popularity of the Promise Keepers movement. Promise keeping, after all, is at the very heart of biblical religion, as in the covenantal faithfulness of God to his typically faithless people. The liberal elites studied by Rothman are generally much less religious than other Americans. Atheism, whether professed or presumed, leaves many people with nobody but a spouse or lover to whom to be faithful. Also among the religious, the complaisant theology of a God who understands, feels our pain, and is in the business of cheap grace offers no experienced drama of promises made and broken. After the "melancholy, long, withdrawing roar" of Matthew Arnold's sea of

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faith, we are left on Dover Beach with nothing but "Ah, love, let us be true to one another!" Romantic reciprocity is the only available nexus for the enactment of covenantal fidelity that was once related not only to the other but to the Other. And even then, among Rothman's elites, the covenant is conditioned by convenience, defined as emotional needs, and leaving ample room for divorce, which is to say serial monogamy. Nor, since they are not autonomous selves capable of full reciprocity, do the children figure in the covenant. A child, conceived or born, is not partner to a felt promise-keeping relationship, especially for the father, in the absence of the One who intends the child from eternity to eternity. Children are guiltlessly consigned to the abortuary or, if born, to some custodial arrangement, for the child is something that happened, not someone with whom we are bound by mutual promise. Even if they were "wanted" children, one may "want" them no longer. That was then and this is now. On Arnold's "darkling plain," there is only you and me, and when you provide "neither joy, nor love, nor light, nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain," you, too, are replaceable. And yet Mr. Frum should not be so dismissive of promise-keeping as mere "legalism." It is more than that. It is a shard, a hint, of the transcendent fidelity once perceived when the sea of faith was full, and it is the way of tides to turn.

■ Democracy, the caustic Hobbes observed, is an aristocracy of orators. By that he meant that the most educated, articulate, and persuasive in fact rule the people by convincing them—typically through demagoguery—that they are ruling themselves. Peter Berkowitz of Harvard suggests that there is more than a hint of Hobbes in the current promotion of Jürgen Habermas' notion of "deliberative democracy." That notion is promoted in Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson's *Democracy and Disagreement: Why Moral Conflict Cannot Be Avoided in Politics* (Harvard University Press), which Berkowitz brilliantly reviews in *The New Republic*. Of course politics must engage moral conflicts, Berkowitz observes, but those who are certified, or certify themselves, as superior deliberators cannot presume to set the terms of the deliberation. He writes: "One could quarrel with the range of opinions that Gutmann and Thompson find 'morally respectable' and therefore worthy of serious engagement. For example, it is unworthy of them to imply, by declaring that 'a moderate pro-life position on abortion' is 'worthy of moral respect,' that a principled opposition to abortion is disreputable. What kind of guidance for the negotiation of disagreement in democracy, one could wonder, can be derived from a conception that by fiat proclaims unreasonable and places beyond the pale of public discussion the considered and strongly held beliefs of many Catholics, Protestants and Jews, to say nothing of the views of the loyal Democrats who have been made to feel like pariahs in their own party for their principled pro-life positions?" Berkowitz is also skeptical of the authors' claim that, in the formation of citizens, "the single most important institution outside government is the educational system." He notes that, for most American children, the educational system is in fact part of the government. More important, he cites Locke and others in underscoring the premier role of the family in preparing children for a responsible part in the polis. He might have gone on to lift up the importance of religion—Tocqueville called it the "first political institution" of American democracy—and other mediating institutions such as voluntary associations and neighborhoods. Habermas' deliberative democracy of completely open discourse has an obvious appeal for intellectuals. Deliberating and discoursing is what they (all right, we) do for a living. Better for democracy and safer for all of us is the wisdom of William F. Buckley's statement that he would rather be ruled by the first two thousand people listed in the Boston phone book than by the faculty of Harvard University. Don't get me wrong. I'm all for deliberation and discourse. It keeps the intellectuals busy, so the people can get on with their business.

■ In debates surrounding *Romer v. Evans*, the case in which the Supreme Court overrode the citizens of Colorado who democratically debated and approved a referendum barring special rights for homosexuals, there has been considerable confusion about what is meant by "special rights." Gay activists strongly protest the use of the term, typically claiming they want only the rights enjoyed by everybody else. But of course that is not the case. They want homosexuals, qua homosexuals, to be defined as a constitutionally protected class. Who belongs to the class is, in turn, defined by conduct. A passage in Justice Antonin Scalia's dissent in *Romer* cuts through some of the confusion: "The Court's opinion contains grim, disapproving hints that Coloradans have been guilty of 'animus' or 'animosity' toward homosexuality, as though that has been established as Unamerican. Of course it is our moral heritage that one should not hate any human being or class of human beings. But I had thought that one could consider certain conduct reprehensible—murder, for example, or polygamy, or cruelty to animals—and could exhibit even 'animus' toward such conduct. Surely that is the only sort of 'animus' at issue here: moral disapproval of homosexual conduct, the same sort of moral disapproval that produced the centuries-old criminal laws that we held constitutional in *Bowers*. The Colorado amendment does not, to speak entirely precisely, prohibit giving favored status to people who are *homosexuals*; they can be favored for many reasons—for example, because they are senior

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citizens or members of racial minorities. But it prohibits giving them favored status *because of their homosexual conduct*—that is, it prohibits its favored status *for homosexuality*." (Scalia's emphasis.)

■ Reviewing several new books on Jerusalem, Serge Schmemann of the *New York Times* describes a city in which national and religious passions are "ingrained in every stone." He writes: "What is remarkable is that these passions are fired by elemental forces of myth, symbol, and belief that in our age are supposed to have surrendered most of their powers to reason and science. Without the Vatican, there would still be a Rome. But Jerusalem is what it is today solely because it is 'holy.' From the time it was chosen by David as the new dwelling place for the ark of the Lord, it has had few other functions; it was never a major center of trade, it has little strategic significance, it has too little water, it is accessible only by roads rising treacherously through steep, rocky hills. Without David, Jesus, and Muhammad, it is little more than a relatively picturesque walled town in the Judean desert; stripped of the centuries of accumulated prayer and passion, even its hallowed sites, with the exception of the exquisite Dome of the Rock, are not particularly impressive, and in many cases are of dubious authenticity." Schmemann, who is the son of the late Orthodox theologian, Alexander Schmemann, is right. The difference that has impressed me is that between Jerusalem and Athens. In the latter, the Parthenon and other sites are clearly appendages to the city, maintained as museums in remembrance of what is long departed. Jerusalem pulsates with the living continuity of sacred stories, often in conflict, and is nothing apart from those stories. Some sites may be of dubious authenticity, but the great events of salvation happened here—if not precisely *right here*, somewhere right around here. The city is the center of the place that Christians have, from the earliest centuries, revered as *The Land Called Holy*, to cite the title of Robert Wilken's fine book on the subject. Every Christian who has the opportunity should, I believe, go there at least once as a pilgrim (not as a tourist) and when there should seek out the small and besieged communities of Christians who yearn for a sign of solidarity.

■ The formidable Isaiah Berlin has been taken on by many worthies, and less than worthies. John Gray of Jesus College, Oxford, tries again in *Isaiah Berlin* (Princeton University Press), and Daniel Silver, writing in the *New Criterion*, thinks Berlin gets the better of it. Gray has over the years tried on and discarded sundry conservatisms, and he is now promoting what he calls "postmodern Green conservatism." Don't ask. My interest here is in what Silver says about Gray's contention that Berlin's famous "negative liberty" is an incoherent public philosophy because it is not able to offer well-grounded reasons for preferring liberalism or, for that matter, liberty. Silver says this: "What sense, we must ultimately ask, does it make to trash our own traditions? Berlin, it seems to me, would rather live with the incoherence of his ideas, if that is the case, than give up his humanism and his liberal faith. If Berlin has not come up with a successful political philosophy, as I believe is the case, his is an honorable failure because it was undertaken in the right spirit—indeed, a liberal spirit in the widest sense of the word. He is, after all, the product of an older academic tradition, whose worst excess was a kind of unworldly donnishness. Gray, on the other hand, inhabits the market-ridden milieu of the contemporary university, where there now resides a malign willingness to sacrifice liberality, humanism, and even truth to the Next Big Idea. If 'postmodern Green conservatism' is the next big idea then we can only hope that the complete marginalization of academic political theory that would doubtless ensue could be followed not by new ideas but by respect for what we, barely, still have." I'm very much with Silver on this one. There are all kinds of limitations to Berlin's "negative liberty," and a much firmer ground for liberal democracy is laid out in, for instance, the 1991 encyclical *Centesimus Annus*. That is an argument that we must continue to press, and of which the contemporary academy is almost totally ignorant. Meanwhile, however, the currently fashionable trashing of classical liberalism is an indulgence that undermines "what we, barely, still have." Liberal democracy that is nonutopian and may even make its last stand with negative liberty is not the best thing. It is just that, on balance and considering the alternatives, it is the best thing on offer at the moment. Come the Kingdom of God, we will have the best thing. Along the way to the Kingdom, we can do the moral and philosophical work of constructing a liberalism that is more coherent and compelling. Isaiah Berlin's is hardly the final word, but it is a word that, during times of severe trial, helped preserve the democratic legacy that the next generation must embrace as its task.

■ The number of Mexican-born people living in the U.S. is now above 6.3 million, according to the Washington-based Urban Institute, and some experts put the figure considerably higher. Somewhat fewer than half are here legally and are eligible for U.S. citizenship. In recent months the Mexican government has shown a new and sympathetic interest in their compatriots north of the border. Two constitutional amendments have been approved, one that may permit Mexicans in the U.S. to cast absentee ballots in Mexico, and the other permitting Mexicans to become U.S. citizens without forfeiting their rights as Mexicans. Although there is regular talk here about the need for the U.S. to regain control of its borders, we seem

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to be witnessing the effective erasure of the border between the U.S. and Mexico. Put differently, many Mexicans in Mexico and the U.S. are speaking with increasing candor of Mexico's reannexation of territory once "stolen" by the U.S., and that is apparently what is happening in Southern California and parts of the Southwest. Business interests represented by the *Wall Street Journal,* along with the Catholic bishops and now the Mexican government, view these developments with favor. There are few voices making the moral case for the maintenance of the border. It would seem that there is a case to be made. In any event, one might suggest that the American people, including Mexican-born U.S. citizens, deserve a serious public debate before this country willy-nilly abandons the notion of national borders. On the other hand, the fact that even raising the question routinely provokes the charge of nativism perhaps indicates that it is too late for such a debate. But on this question, too, my democratic proclivities get the best of me. I do think the American people should have a say on matters such as borders and immigration policy. Maybe that makes me a populist.

■ Supporters of the unlimited abortion license are terrified by medical and legal developments that make it increasingly implausible to treat the moment of birth as a "bright line" distinguishing a baby from an appendage to a woman's body. On the medical front, there are developments such as the recently reported first-of-its-kind bone marrow transplant given a four-month-old fetus with a life-threatening immune system disease. The baby boy, now eighteen months old, is doing just fine. On the legal front, more states are prosecuting people who willfully or by accident kill or injure unborn babies. The pro-abortionists claim that this is a zero-sum proposition: any rights extended the unborn are rights taken away from the woman. "Until the courts say the two rights can coexist, we don't know for sure that they can," says Priscilla Smith of the Center for Reproductive Law and Policy. This zero-sum approach helps explain why pro-abortionists feel that they have no choice but to assume a don't-give-an-inch posture, opposing even restrictions on infanticide, as in their fight against the partial-birth abortion ban. Smith helped defend a nineteen-year-old Florida woman who in 1994 shot a bullet into her stomach to end her six-month pregnancy. The Florida court upheld the manslaughter charge against her lawyers' claim that "when Ms. Ashley shot herself, her fetus was part of her own body." Smith, interestingly, argues that it should not be up to judges and prosecutors to create new laws to fit new definitions of crime. "If you want to prosecute women in this way, you have to go to the legislatures," says Smith. This is a remarkable shift for proponents of "reproductive rights," whose entire campaign has been based upon the judicial usurpation of legislative authority. To Ms. Smith and her colleagues, pro-life advocates might respond as the spider to the fly, "Do come into the parlor of democracy."

■ Some while back we noted that Phyllis Fleury, the first woman ordained in the Church of England, had become a Roman Catholic. Father Dick Kim of St. John's Episcopal Church in Detroit points out that she was the first woman ordained in the (Anglican) Church of Ireland. We stand corrected.

■ Forget the Grand Inquisitor. He was a softy compared with the petty inquisitors who jump on anyone who deviates from the smelly little orthodoxies of our elite culture. The *Wall Street Journal* carried a piece by five psychiatrists who work with people who are distressed by their homosexuality. Based upon their combined decades of experience, the doctors say that therapy can, at a rate roughly comparable to therapy for other distresses, help such people become heterosexual. Their point is that the current dogma that homosexuality is an unchangeable condition prevents many people from obtaining the help they want. Some days later, the entire letters section of the *Journal* is taken over by people screaming "Heresy!" The substance of their message, delivered in one voice, is: Homosexuality is unchangeable, homosexuality is healthy, and homosexuals must not be allowed to want to change. As one inquisitor puts it, "The only choice for a gay person is whether to accept being gay and live a happy, productive life, or deny it and live in a lonely closet, lying and hiding." How dare anyone seek an alternative! In the politics of choice, we will prescribe your choices.

■ The newsletter of the Catholic Women's Network in the UK published an article reporting on a "circle weekend" for women in Australia. The article contained passages such as: "We began with a foot massage and then, in a circle, we each in turn spoke, saying, 'I matter. I affirm self. What I am, I have a right to be,' and then some affirming/growth statement such as 'The loving and caring in me reaches out to you, and you, and you.' It was really moving." The trouble is that the article turned out to be a spoof written by Joanna Bogle, a critic of radical feminism. She said the article was clearly heretical and downright silly, and its acceptance by the editor of *Network* casts doubt on the Catholic credentials of the feminist group. Not so, said editor Alison Gelder. She denied the article was heretical and added: "To take advantage of my gullibility in this way isn't very nice."

■ You've heard me say that it's a very bad thing that our culture has lost a common biblical vocabulary, in part because of the proliferation of Bible translations and paraphrases beyond numbering. I have also expressed the wish, admittedly somewhat

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whimsical, that the whole English-speaking world could agree on the Revised Standard Version as the standard version. John Stek, chairman of the committee on Bible translation of the International Bible Society, writes to tell me just how whimsical that wish is. The New International Version, which appeared in 1978, now dominates the Bible market. With 36 percent of the market, it outstrips even the King James Version, while my beloved RSV had about 5 percent of the market before it was displaced by the unfortunate New Revised Standard Version. Ah well, as I've become accustomed to saying, Lose a few, lose a few. I'm not as persuaded as is Mr. Stek that we need "Bibles" for children and adults who can barely read. In the past, there was no shortage of Bible story books and other Bible-based literature for children, but they were not told that a book written for third-graders was the Bible itself. Shouldn't children and everybody else know that there is a very real and determinate text, however translated, that *is* the Holy Bible? I'm just asking.

■ "And he is so handsome and *so* sincere too! I can't stand those groaning old professors who attack him." So said the woman buying multiple copies of the German edition of Daniel Goldhagen's *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust.* Goldhagen's book took some very hard knocks from reviewers, including this writer, when published here last year, and the German academic establishment was equally critical. Then the quickly translated German edition came out and almost immediately shot to the top of the best-seller lists. (The German title was toned down to "Hitler's Willing Executors.") Goldhagen did a speaking tour of Germany cities, and almost everybody describes it as a "triumphal march," with people scalping tickets to get into packed houses of cheering Goldhagen fans. How to explain this response to an author who claims that the German people are endemically anti-Semitic, that a people historically committed to "eliminationist" anti-Semitism joyfully embraced "exterminationist" anti-Semitism when Hitler gave them the chance? Some commentators attribute the triumphant march to his soft-spoken, sensitive, James Dean-like presentation of self, and that may well be part of it. Also important, however, is that in his German appearances Goldhagen highlighted his praise for the "new generation" of Germans that has overcome the nation's historic anti-Semitism. In the American edition, the absolution of contemporary Germans was buried among hundreds of footnotes; in Germany it was the centerpiece of Goldhagen's presentation. People like to be flattered. Young people in particular like to be told that they are ever so morally superior to the generations that went before them. So Goldhagen in Germany was an adroit salesman. There may be more to it, however. German writers on the Third Reich and the Holocaust have tended to lay the blame on Hitler and his band of fanatics or, in more recent years, have explained what happened by reference to elaborate theories of "systemic" and "structural" causalities. By so relentlessly focusing attention on the moral turpitude of "ordinary" Germans, Goldhagen seemed like a fresh wind cutting through the smog of evasion and mendacity. I believe the book is every bit as hateful and dishonest as I said it was. It is possible, however, that a bad book, cleverly pitched as a celebration of democracy and personal responsibility, might have good consequences. That is what seems to have happened with Goldhagen in Germany.

■ Of course almost nobody trying to make a public point thinks the media pay enough attention. But the leaders of this year's January 22 March for Life are rightly outraged. As usual, estimates vary, but there were 125,000 to 225,000 marchers in Washington. In an in-your-face move, on the same day the Clinton Administration had Mrs. Clinton and Vice President and Mrs. Gore appear at a pro-abortion meeting to pledge allegiance to, among other things, partial-birth abortion. The next day, the front page of the *New York Times* had a big picture and story on the presidential party's statements, in which it was also mentioned that there was a march for life. Right next to this was another big story on explosions in Atlanta that may or may not have been related to abortion clinics. Cardinal Law of Boston, chairman of the bishops' pro-life committee, called the *Times* treatment "particularly egregious." He maintains his reputation for understatement.

■ In the Bernstein-Politi book, *His Holiness*, the authors quote Father Vincent O'Keefe of the Society of Jesus being very critical of Pope John Paul II. I wrote, "Charity invites the thought that Fr. O'Keefe was misquoted." I have subsequently talked with Fr. O'Keefe. He does not say he was misquoted, but that the comment cited was made "on the fly" in a series of long conversations with Carl Bernstein, who gave it a spin that he, O'Keefe, did not intend. He says he certainly would not suggest, as Bernstein-Politi have him suggesting, that John Paul II has failed to make himself available to the universal Church.

■ Recall the reprehensible behavior of jailers in Lane County, Oregon, who secretly taped an inmate's sacramental confession in order to get evidence against him. For a while, it almost brought prison ministries in the state to a halt. Following the determined leadership of Archbishop Francis George of Portland, the religious communities of Oregon rose up in protest. Now a panel of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals has ruled that the taping violated First Amendment "free exercise" rights, as well as the Religious Freedom Restoration Act and the Fourth Amendment. The court ordered an

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injunction against any future tapings. Father Michael Maslowsky of Portland, who is also the attorney who did yeoman work on the case, says, "For the first time since this sad affair began, we have a court that has said categorically that this tape recording is illegal, unconstitutional, and cannot happen again. This issue has never before been addressed in this manner." Just so you know that the courts can sometimes do the right thing, too. Of course, the state could have legislated the same outcome, and collected a scalp or two from among the prison authorities while it was at it.

■ I mentioned my decision not to buy that coffee mug that was made in China. Ms. Rita Anton of Chicago writes about a different experience. She went shopping for Christmas ornaments, only to discover that almost all of them, along with crèches and other seasonal paraphernalia, bore the label "Made in China." Quite possibly, it is reasonable to surmise, by slave laborers imprisoned for their Christian faith.

■ Note how a casual literary trope can assume and advance one resolution of a huge argument, in this case the argument over the meaning of feminism. Nora Ephron is reviewing in the *New York Times Book Review* Katharine Graham's *Personal History*, a book generously excerpted and extravagantly puffed by Ms. Graham's publishing empire. Ephron writes, "Katharine Graham turns out to have had not two lives but four, and the story of her journey from daughter to wife to widow to woman parallels to a surprising degree the history of women in this century." As Ms. Ephron's way of putting the matter parallels to an unsurprising degree one feminist faction's doctrine that one becomes a woman when the self is freed from obliging connections to others.

■ The London *Tablet* agrees that theological relativism is a problem and the Church has to draw the line somewhere, but there is no line drawn anywhere by Cardinal Ratzinger and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) that does not outrage the editors' liberal sensibilities. So it is, unsurprisingly, in the case of the excommunicated Sri Lankan theologian, Tissa Balasuriya. The *Tablet* opines, "But if Christ, known by other names or by no name at all, is the operating principle of salvation in all religions that lead their followers to God, . . . then many difficult questions arise when dialogue is attempted with members of those other religions." As Jesus did not say, "I am the operating principle of salvation." Excerpts from Belasuriya's writings published in the *Tablet* itself leave little doubt that he challenges not only the immaculate conception (he was a priest of the Oblates of the Immaculate Conception) and virgin birth, but the divinity of Christ and the very concept of dogma itself. Asked by CDF to sign a profession of faith that includes the cardinal doctrines of Catholic belief, Father Belasuriya refused, choosing instead to sign a profession of faith drawn up by Pope Paul VI. In the view of CDF, that would have been an acceptable substitute, but Balasuriya insisted upon adding the following escape clause: "I, Fr. Tissa Balasuriya OMI, make and sign this Profession of Faith of Pope Paul VI in the context of theological development and church practice since Vatican II and the freedom and responsibility of Christians and theological searchers, under canon law." In other words, he is obliged to the profession of faith except where he holds himself free to dissent from it. As Cardinal Ratzinger explained, the escape clause "puts in question all the content and so renders his signature invalid." A point made by Ratzinger that has been ignored in almost all accounts of the Balasuriya affair is that the problem is not with the theologian's syncretism in engaging other world religions but with his corrupting interreligious dialogue by importing into it the tradition of Western skepticism and relativism. The Church is fully committed to a dialogue between, say, Buddhism and Catholic faith. A dialogue between Marx and Feuerbach, on the one hand, and Buddhism, on the other, conducted in the guise of Buddhist-Catholic dialogue, is quite another matter.

■ So this county judge in Gadsden, Alabama, has on the wall of his courtroom two hand-carved wooden tablets with the Ten Commandments. Judge Roy Moore carved them himself. Not surprisingly, the ACLU is on his case and got a higher court to order the removal of the tablets. The news story continues, "Mr. Joel Sogol of the ACLU said it came down to a simple question: 'Can the state acknowledge God, and if so, whose God can it acknowledge?' He wondered what the reaction would be if the religion in question was Islam." Do not be too hard on poor Mr. Sogol, for his obtuseness is deeply entrenched in today's legal and political prejudices. With great patience and courtesy one must point out to such as Mr. Sogol that no state, and certainly not a democratic state, can fail to be cognizant of the culture of which it is part. Then, ever so gently, you explain to him about Athens, Jerusalem, and the story of what is still commonly called the Western culture that produced a Judeo-Christian moral tradition from which came our law and the ways in which we deliberate the ordering of our common life. Do it slowly, step by step, for much of this is probably new to him. Or you might simply invite him to open his eyes and take a look around Etowah County, Alabama. He will likely recognize almost immediately that it is not an Islamic society, and he might even, perhaps somewhat sheepishly, admit that he does not *really* wonder what the reaction would be if the religion in question was Islam. But, if he is a very slow learner, you might inform him that Islam, too, has the Ten Commandments. But

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don't rush it. Remedial educators advise that it is very important, in the case of those suffering from ACLU Syndrome, not to induce culture shock. (In March, the House of Representatives passed a resolution supporting Judge Moore that has no legal effect but is a nice gesture.)

■ Protesting a form of cultural imperialism that otherwise gets little attention here, a large number of Catholic bishops from Latin America, the Caribbean, and the Philippines issued the following statement in February when the Congress was debating the refunding of U.S. population programs abroad: "In Latin America and other countries of the Third World we have suffered for many years a campaign against births. There have been massive sterilizations in many countries. There has been the distribution of contraceptives, some of these forbidden in First World countries because they are dangerous to the health of women. Many organizations in the First World finance these campaigns with great amounts of money. Now they have gone a step further, proposing abortion as a means of population control. We know that abortion is a horrible crime. That is why we oppose the proposal of President Clinton to allocate funds from the United States for this. This proposal is unjust, offensive, and criminal. We believe the people of the United States should not contribute to these contraceptive campaigns and must not include abortion as though it were a contraceptive method." It didn't change Clinton's mind, but some things need to be said.

■ In the third century it seems that there were two Christians named Valentine who were martyred for the faith. In the Church's memory the two were conflated into the St. Valentine whose day is observed on February 14. In circuitous ways, the martyr's love was transmogrified into the romantic love celebrated on St. Valentine's Day. Now the winding ways of history's cunning have moved on. This year the American Social Health Association declared St. Valentine's day to be National Condom Day. "Give your valentine a condom, or use one yourself," said association president Peggy Clarke. "We encourge sex partners to talk openly about the sensitive subject of sexual health and to use condoms to protect one another from sexually transmitted diseases." The loss of the day's significance for the ultimate love of martyrdom happened a long time ago and is probably irretrievable. Now it seems to be in the proceess of being lost for romantic love as well. But another small signpost on the progressive slouch toward Gomorrah.

■ Were it not for the honor of the thing, St. Valentine might have preferred to remain unknown. In our world of competing perversities on the way to the same destination, one notes that the National Organization of Women (NOW) has other plans for St. Valentine's Day. NOW declared it the "National Day of Action in Support of Same-Sex Marriage." The organization provided an "action kit" that includes a list of suggested activities, such as staging mock wedding ceremonies on the steps of the local courthouse and sending Valentine cards favoring same-sex marriage to legislators. The kit also includes "chants and songs." For instance, "We're here, we're queer / We're walking down the aisle." And "I love her, she loves me, homosexuality / People think we're just friends, but we're really lesbians!" So put NOW down on the side of romantic love, of a sort.

■ The editors of *Commonweal* note that I recently chastised that publication—plus *Christian Century*, *America*, and *Christianity Today*—for not practicing the dialogue they preach. "Each of them," I wrote, "seems to plod along in its own track, maintaining an enclosed universe of discourse." My point was that these publications would make for more interesting reading if they were in conversation with one another. For some reason which I assume is not intentional, *Commonweal* understood this as a "plea for attention" by FT. Now I admit there is little purpose in publishing a journal if it doesn't get attention, and on that score publishing FT is very gratifying indeed. But I return to my original contention that the above-mentioned magazines that have more narrowly defined audiences would be more interesting if they regularly engaged one another in dialogue. It would, among other things, both strengthen and display the liveliness of diverse perspectives within the several religious communities. Not, of course, that *Commonweal* is not interesting, even when it is not paying attention to FT.

■ "Everyone who writes for the public, I should imagine, sometimes receives letters which are not only uncomprehending but stark mad. I myself have made a small Holmesian study of the envelopes in which correspondents enclose their written responses, and have come to recognize, for example, when the writer is angry, even before I have opened the envelope. The *enragés* of England—who seem to congregate disproportionately in Bournemouth and its environs—use tiny envelopes of the meanest quality, of a dirty off-white color. These they address, using a thirty-year-old manual typewriter whose keys they have struck with such force that the letters are no longer properly aligned. Moreover, the type is faded because the ribbon is exhausted of ink and will never be replaced." So writes Theodore Dalrymple in the *Spectator*, and he got it quite right. Such letters arriving here tend to come disproportionately from the borough of Queens and the state of Virginia. Dalrymple continues: "One can also tell the mad letter proper by its envelope. It is

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frequently a shade of mauve, there is a lengthy *post scriptum* message scrawled on its flap. The letter itself conforms to no orthodox layout, with handwritten sentences meandering round the edges of the paper . . . and contains symbols and drawings in addition to writing. Last week, for example, I received a letter from a witch in Cornwall, complete with femino-wyccan runes, informing me that money was the means by which grasping and greedy men had always prevented nurturing women from ruling the world as it should be ruled, with attention to love rather than finances." Right again. Plus these writers are much given to emphasizing assertions by putting them in the upper case, and are excessively fond of exclamation points. As often as not, their outrage is exacerbated by my not having responded to their last literary assault. I try to make a habit of responding, however noncommittally, unless they are so abusive that they could not conceivably want to hear from the idiot they believe me to be. Respond or don't respond, nothing seems to discourage them. I suppose it is a life of sorts, writing angry letters.

■ A little commentary here, "Inhaling Second-Hand Fanaticism," caught the attention of Pastor Lou Nuechterlein of Cheshire, Connecticut, who agrees that we should not talk about "saving" lives by this health measure or that, but about "prolonging" and "extending" life, and even then within limits. He drew our attention to a 1984 hymn by Brian Wren, titled "God, Let Me Welcome Timely Death." Here are stanzas three, four, and five:

Our pioneers of knowledge seek
new frontiers for death and birth,
and lure us with the ancient dream
of immortality on earth.

Yet who would live, at whose expense,
if in a brave new world sublime,
elites enjoyed extended powers
while millions starved before their time?

And who could tell tomorrow's child
to go and reap where we have sown,
if elders ruled for endless years
and youth could never claim its own?

God, Let Me Welcome Timely Death by Brian Wren (© 1986 Hope Publishing Co., Carol Stream, IL 60188, all rights reserved, used by permission.)

■ Church-growth specialist Lyle E. Schaller says, "If you want to reach people born since 1955, this is your instruction manual for church in the twenty-first century." If he's right, one may be forgiven for fearing that the gates of hell will prevail after all. *Entertainment Evangelicalism: Taking the Church Public* by Walt Kallestad (Abingdon, 144 pp., $15.95) is a smug, self-serving, fatuous little how-to tract for successfully pandering to popular taste in the name of communicating the gospel. The author heads the Community Church of Joy in Phoenix, Arizona, which is associated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and, very loosely, with Lutheranism. The last five pages are devoted to "The Theology of Entertainment Evangelism." It fails the laugh test. The author's market wizardry does not forget to include just a touch of the presumably prophetic as he hails "Bob Dylan writing songs that challenge our false values" and the "Sojourners Community of Washington challenging the whole war-making madness of our times." The Church of Joy has something for everyone, even slickly packaging Bob Dylan and Jim Wallis for baby boomers and baby busters who enjoy the occasional frisson of feeling radical. Particularly galling is the dismissiveness toward traditions that know something about the depth and the cost of discipleship. For instance, we are told that the Orthodox Church in Russia was "rich and powerful, but callously unconcerned about injustice and poverty. Its leaders debated the color of clerical vestments while Kerensky and Lenin planned the Marxist revolution to 'liberate the people.'" Yes indeed, Kerensky was all for the Marxist revolution. Aside from the ignorance and spiritual vapidity on exhibit in books such as this, entertainment Christianity is notable for the astonishing claim of its practitioners that they are the first to have discovered that apostasy pays. The operators of these McGospel franchises say that their critics are envious of their success. Maybe some are. Many more, I expect, are moved by pity, with just a touch of nausea.

■ I mentioned a proposal by a certain Father Richard McBrien of Notre Dame, who still has a column in some Catholic papers. He proposed a new indictment of priestly celibacy, pointing out that by the year 2000 "more than one million" "above-average" Catholics will not have existed because the forty thousand "on average, above average" priests living in 1900 could not marry and have children. That column also caught the eye of Steve Serra of Camarillo, California, who offers the following reflection: "Using his math and logic, I calculate that if St. Paul had married and fathered three children, and each of his descendants did the same, we would now be witnessing the birth of the 60th generation of his above-average Catholic descendants—and that generation would number over 42 octillion! (That's 42 followed by 27 zeros!) But no. St. Paul chose to remain celibate 'for the sake of the kingdom of heaven' (Matthew 19:12), to accept that gift and live a life of 'undivided devotion' to 'the affairs of the Lord' (1 Corinthians 7:7, 32-35). And what did he have to show for it? Some small Christian communities scattered about the Mediterranean and barely more than a dozen letters

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that would survive. And above-average Catholic descendants? Not a one."

■ The elderly Bishop George Lynch and Michael Moscinski, a young Franciscan monk whose religious name is Brother Fidelius, sat quietly in the driveway of a Dobbs Ferry, New York, abortuary, praying the rosary. Judge John Sprizzo of the U.S. District Court had earlier ordered them not to do that kind of thing. They were arrested and charged with contempt of court. Invoking numerous judicial precedents in connection with acts of conscientious resistance during the Vietnam War era, as well as the history of civil disobedience in Western culture, Judge Sprizzo found them not guilty. Their action, he said, was clearly conscientious, clearly sincere, clearly motivated by religious belief (about the truth of which the government must not judge), and not willful. "Willful conduct, when used in the criminal context, generally means deliberate conduct done with a bad purpose either to disobey or to disregard the law," according to *Black's Law Dictionary*. In a footnote to his opinion, Judge Sprizzo posed a striking analogy with the past and an ominous possibility for the future. "The Court is not persuaded by the Government's argument that there cannot or should not be any defense of justification or necessity merely because the conduct at issue, i.e., abortion, is legal as a matter of positive law. Were a person to have violated a court order directing the return of a runaway slave when Dred Scott was the law, would a genuinely held belief that a slave was a human person and not an article of property be a matter the Court could not consider in deciding whether that person was guilty of a criminal contempt charge? And if so, what moral justification could be offered for trying government officials, including judges, for implementing the positive laws of Nazi Germany? These considerations are made even more relevant because of present United States commitments to international treaties on human rights, which could conceivably, at some time, put United States positive laws relating to abortion and the judges who implement them at variance with and in violation of a future international consensus on that issue." One hopes that Judge Sprizzo's decision will give other judges, faced with cases involving nonviolent protest against abortion, pause for thought. Long pause.

■ "From the Camp of the Incendiaries" is the wry title of a reflection by Hadley Arkes on why some friends reacted so negatively to the FT symposium on the judicial usurpation of politics. Writing in *Crisis*, he observes that a crisis of conscience is created when the courts not only countenance the killing of the innocent but also decree, as in the *Casey* decision, that moral objection to such injustice is an offense against the constitutional order. Arkes writes: "In the end, then, we bite our lips and counsel people to accept the restraint of the law. But discreetly covered over here is the fact that we cannot really explain why we should be constrained, in principle, from rescuing the innocent from the arbitrary taking of their lives. Lincoln once wrote to his friend, Joshua Speed, 'You ought . . . to appreciate how much the great body of the Northern people do crucify their feelings in order to maintain their loyalty to the Constitution and the Union.' Our symposium sought to convey our sense of the depth of the problem, even as we preserved our commitment to lawfulness. Our friends do not quarrel with our assessment of how bad, in fact, things are, but they seem to condemn us for a want of prudence in saying so. Of our forbearance they say nothing. What they apparently find disturbing—to the strain of their own tolerance—is that we should be artless enough to say, in public, that the regime is truly in crisis because certain thresholds of principle have already been crossed."

■ You've seen it quoted times beyond number: "When a man stops believing in God he doesn't then believe in nothing, he believes in anything." G. K. Chesterton, right? Not quite. Nigel Rees, editor of an engaging newsletter that tracks down quotations, reports that Chesterton's fictional Father Brown said things very much like that, but he suspects the source is Emile Cammaerts' 1937 book on GKC, which paraphrased him as believing that "The first effect of not believing in God is to believe in anything." "It may be upon this," writes Rees, "that all the subsequent quoters have constructed their versions." I expect GKC will not mind if folk continue to attribute the statement to him, in whatever version.

■ You might think about putting your pastor or rabbi on that list of potential subscribers you were going to send.

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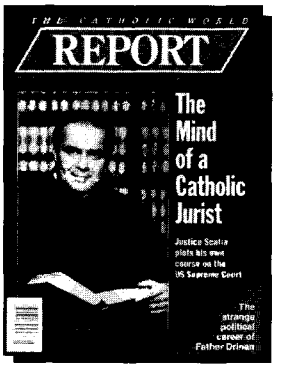

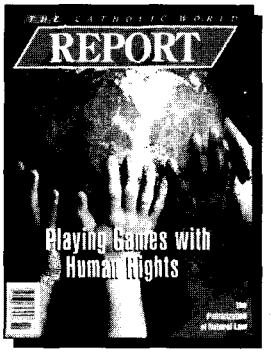

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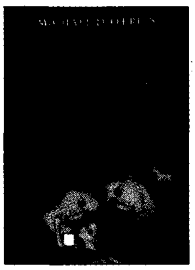

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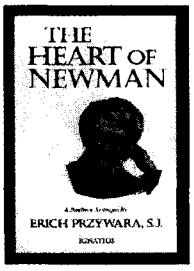

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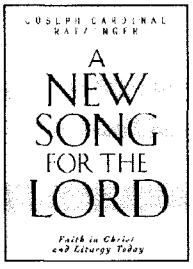
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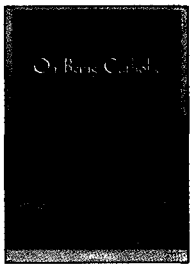

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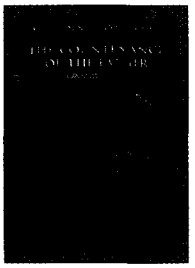

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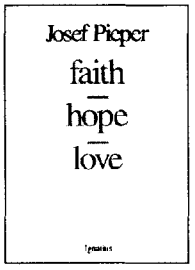

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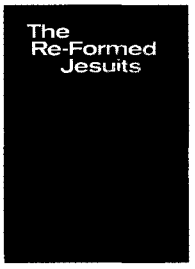

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